

Kaleidoscope

Alternative fashion MHA Zine



GO!
PLUS
ULTRA!

FREE
PDF

IN THIS ISSUE



04

GREATCLOUDNINJA

SWORDS CROSS(PLAY)ED For people like Katsuki, who made pretty good money off of their cosplay work, Gamescon was basically one big business meeting.



21

EMERALDWAVES

IF THE DRESS FITS Stroking her hands over the bottom of a short and frilly orange and pink one, she sighed. Ochako wished she could buy all the clothes she loved, but it just wasn't possible.



34

ERZA MIKAZUKI

FOR THE LOVE OF FASHION Katsuki can't focus on what's being asked of Izuku, completely distracted by how unkempt the number one pro hero looks right now.

52

KYUUKA KOINU

BREATHE LIFE Katsuki tossed away each magazine page he was given with great distaste and everyone else sitting at the long table held their breaths, afraid.



62

MIRA

CONFIDENCE He's never met anyone who smiles so much or looks so determined, even in the face of impossible defeat. And yet, for some reason, Shouto can't help but watch him.



'77

OTA

A STITCH IN TIME SAVES LIVES (AND MAKES PEOPLE FALL IN LOVE) The needle spun, the fabric crumpled, and Mina's latest masterpiece was reduced to a tangled mess of color and thread.



87

SMURFEE

ONE COLOR TOO MANY Momo watches as Denki surveys the spread between them. Shimmering serpentine greens, iridescent violets, sparkling blues — even striking reds and eye-popping pinks.

WORDS CROSS(PLAY)ED

Katsuki triple-checked his outfit over his shoulder, making sure his cape was draping properly behind him. The cape was a monstrosity of off-white fur and tattered red cloth, but it looked fantastic in their early test shots when the wind caught it just right.

Satisfied, he adjusted the lacing on his three-quarter sleeve cropped shirt, making sure just enough of his pectoral muscles were visible through the gap between the two sides of the shirt. The fur wrap around his waist and the dagger were set, the pants and thigh sheath were perfect, and the boots were on point. The light makeup he wore enhanced his natural features and kept his face from looking shiny in photos; while his natural ashy blond hair stuck out in almost inhuman spikes, thanks to an absurd amount of hair product.

Picking up his enormous broken sword, Katsuki put on a stern look—and suddenly he was Gilbert Cobb, the most famous Riftwalker from the trading card game *Mystic: Ascending*.

A knock on the hotel room door interrupted his posing. “Bakugou?” a voice asked from outside. “Are you coming?”

“Yeah, I’m coming!” Katsuki tucked his cell phone in his pants pocket before he stepped out of the room, nearly bumping into the volunteer who’d been assigned as his “handler” for Gamescon

GREATCLOUDNINJA

weekend.

Gamescon Tokyo was the biggest video game and anime convention of the year for central Japan. Unlike developers’ conferences, Gamescon was open to the public and was *the* place to see and be seen in cosplay.

For people like Katsuki, who made pretty good money off of their cosplay work, Gamescon was basically one big business meeting. It was Katsuki’s fourth year in a row at the convention: the first two he was an attendee, and last year he’d managed to snag a panelist spot. There was nothing quite like getting to spend an hour yelling at people about how shitty their cardboard and fun foam armor looked and how it was better to save up for the higher quality materials like thermoplastics if they wanted a really screen-accurate look for their costumes.

This year, however, he was attending as a professional cosplayer—not as a panelist, but

as part of the Mages of the Coast team that was making the official announcement about a new upcoming set release. He was being paid to cosplay as Gilbert Cobb; particularly the outfit Cobb wore in the art for the Riftwalker card “Gilbert Cobb, Scion of Flames.” The card was over a decade old—Katsuki had gotten a copy out of a pack when he was nine, in one of his first experiences with Mystic: Ascending—and Mages of the Coast would be reprinting the card for the first time ever in the new set.

The volunteer waiting for Katsuki stepped backward quickly to avoid being smacked in the face by the hotel room door, or run over by a tall blond in heavily modded combat boots. “We don’t have much time before the doors open to the public. Are you ready, Bakugou?”

“Do I look like I’m not fucking ready?” Katsuki asked irritably.

“Ah—force of habit. Let’s get going.”

With a nod, Katsuki followed the young woman down to the elevator. “So I’m just supposed to stand in front of the booth for photo-ops and shit, right?” he asked.

Ears—Katsuki couldn’t remember her real name, but she had stretched earlobes that dangled nearly to her shoulders—nodded in confirmation. “Yes, that’s right. You’ll be at the booth from 10 to 8. You’ll have breaks for bathroom and lunch, of course, but for the most part you’re just supposed to stand there and look pretty. The one exception is during the announcement today at 2, they want you to help with hyping up the crowd in the exhibition hall.”

Katsuki bit back a grimace at the thought of all the forced social interactions he was going to have to deal with. It was going to suck, but the paycheck at the end would be worth the frustration of playing nice with so many extras. Plus, he’d gotten a free ticket to the convention and he only had to work one day—Sunday was his to do with as he pleased. In all, it really wasn’t that bad of a gig. “Sounds easy enough.”

“Great. I’ll come get you when it’s time for the panel. When you need a break, there’s a private

rest area just off the main hall that is fully stocked with snacks and drinks. Just make sure you let Shinsou know you’re leaving and try to limit your breaks to 10 minutes unless you’re eating lunch.”

Nodding, Katsuki followed the woman through an employee entrance to access the back hallways of the hotel and conference center. Within just a few minutes, they made it to the large ballroom that had been set up with booths for the merchandise dealers to display their products. The featured artists were on the other side of an airwall that split the space in two.

As they walked through the space, Katsuki was surprised by the variety of merch around the ballroom: everything ranging from plush toys to risqué hug pillows, from enamel pins to exquisitely detailed figures. Clothing and posters were hung from temporary walls erected behind some of the tables; other booths were filled with mobile bookshelves stuffed with manga and anime, or cardboard boxes with painstakingly sorted and alphabetized doujinshi.

The Mages of the Coast booth dominated one wall, taking up three whole booths’ worth of space. Katsuki could see MOTC employees ducking in and out of a back area covered with a black curtain, bringing out dozens of binders and large prints of famous cards. One such print was of the art for the infamous Black Aster card, a ridiculously rare card from the original set that had recently sold for upwards of ¥250,000.

The man in charge of the booth, sleepy-eyed with purple hair, waved at Bakugou and Ears as they approached. “Hey, there you are. You must be Bakugou. I’m Shinsou, nice to meet you.”

Katsuki gave the man a brief nod. “So am I expected to just block traffic, or what?” he asked. “Thought that was the number one rule of these shits: no photos in the walkway.”

“We have a photo-op area for you next to the booth, actually,” Troll Hair replied, gesturing to an empty space with colored cloths draped to create a backdrop and the Mystic: Ascending logo hanging from the top of the pipe and drape. There was a throne-like chair for him to sit in, making him grin—a fitting seat for the best character in the

series. They had even brought in a scaled-down cutout of Gilbert's arch-nemesis: Feltan Tolar, an evil dragon Riftwalker hell-bent on taking over the multiverse. Katsuki shifted his sword to the other arm—it was made of real metal, obviously—before making his way over to inspect the space.

"Well, I'll leave you to it. You have my number if you need anything," Ears said to Katsuki.

"Yeah, yeah, I'll be fine. This isn't my first time doing a fucking photo op."

She rolled her eyes, but nodded. "Sounds good. I'll be back in a few hours to get you for the announcement event."

"Whatever."



Midoriya Izuku surreptitiously slid a finger under the long, green extensions clipped onto his head, scratching at a stubborn itch he couldn't quite seem to soothe.

The train was usually pretty packed, but today it was especially so—what with all the armor, props, and other supplies being carried toward Gamescon Tokyo. Izuku, himself, was carrying an almost unnervingly large sword, which he held close to his chest in an effort to keep the delicate prop from getting damaged. His long skirt swirled around his legs with every sway of the train; thankfully, he was used to the sensation of the satiny fabric brushing against his thigh-high stockings.

To the untrained eye, Izuku looked just like a girl. His eyes were lined with kohl and a shimmery highlight had been brushed over his freckled cheeks. His lips were dewy and pink; the lines of his jaw and nose had been softened with judicious contour, thanks to the talented hand of his friend Uraraka Ochako, an aspiring makeup artist.

"You mess up your makeup today and I'll kill you," she'd said to him teasingly before sending him off that morning. "Unless it's because you made out with a hot guy—then I'll only kill you if you don't get his number."

"Okay, mom," Izuku had replied sarcastically. "And if I see any buff, single ladies, I'll get their number for you."

"Yes please." Ochako had sighed dramatically and flopped backward onto Izuku's bed. "Especially if you see any Miruko cosplayers. She's so dreamy."

The slowing of the train under his feet brought Izuku out of his thoughts. A few minutes later, he and the vast majority of the other riders were disembarking to head to the conference center.

He'd gotten a bit of a late start, since he'd had to wait for Ochako to help him with his makeup, so it was a little after 10 by the time Izuku arrived. The line for badge pickup was horrendous—thankfully, he'd stopped by late yesterday afternoon to get his, so he was able to walk right in. Almost instantly, a handful of men with cameras stopped him for photos.

Not surprisingly, they asked if Izuku really knew the character he was cosplaying as, or if he'd just seen the character online and liked the outfit. "Actually, I've been playing Mystic: Ascending since I was a little kid," he explained; he kept his voice light and soft, affecting a feminine tone as he spoke. He'd been through this before in previous crossplays—it was easier to let them think he was really a girl than to try to explain to most people that yes, he was a boy, and no, he wasn't a crossdresser outside of his costumes. He tried not to bring it up at all unless he had to show his ID for some reason, like the time he crossplayed at ComiMarket and wanted to buy some R-18 doujinshi.

The photographers rolled their eyes at the response, but snapped their photos anyway. Izuku smiled and waved as they walked off to get some shots of a group of sentai cosplayers in full masks and costumes.

The rest of the day progressed in much the same way. Mostly he wandered around the game displays, though he got stopped every so often by fans of Mystic: Ascending complimenting him on his costume or asking for a picture. When he stopped by the booth itself, he smiled widely at the way the staff reacted when they saw his outfit.

“Kerrian Dayne!” A man with a shock of purple hair returned Izuku’s grin. “You just missed Gilbert.”

“There’s a Gilbert Cobb cosplayer?” Izuku asked curiously. “I haven’t seen them around anywhere!”

The man shook his head. “Nah, he isn’t an attendee. He’s one of our special guests. He’s been posing for pictures over there.” He gestured to the set with the throne and the cardboard cutouts next to the sales booth. “But he just left to get lunch. If you want to swing by in half an hour or so, we can do a photo op with you.”

“Oh, that sounds awesome! Thank you so much!” Izuku inclined his head in a bow before heading off to look at the next booth.

/// K A C C H A N ?

He had every intention of returning to the MOTC booth for the photos, but he ended up running into some friends and getting food with them. By the time they got back to the convention center, it was already after 1. If he didn’t hurry and get in line, he wouldn’t get a good seat for the 2:00 panel the company was hosting.

The topic for the panel was very hush-hush. MOTC hadn’t said anything about it, other than that it would involve some Q&A with the card design team, and that there would be a big announcement. The Mystic: Ascending communities on Reddit and Twitter had been buzzing with rumors and speculation for weeks now: some people thought they were making changes to the Reserve List, while others thought it had to do with a new spinoff game. Even the usual leakers had nothing to post.

The one clue that MOTC had given was a mysterious tweet shared earlier that morning. It was rare for the official account to like or retweet photos of cosplayers, but a particular photo had found its way to their feed: a broken sword resting on a powerful, red-cloaked shoulder.

As Izuku scrolled through his timeline, the image was being quoted and shared by nearly all of the big name players and fans he followed. The

overwhelming response was confusion: *Why did MOTC share a photo of a Gilbert Cobb cosplay?*

They also had the Gilbert Cobb cosplayer on site today... maybe it was the same person?

“Oh my god, there you are! I’ve been looking everywhere for you!” A voice spoke right next to Izuku’s ear—he jumped in surprise, nearly dropping his phone. When he looked over, he saw a woman around his age with large gauges in her ears. She had a STAFF badge hanging from around her neck.

Izuku furrowed his brow at the woman. “Excuse me?”

“I was told to come get you for the panel. You’re needed in the back for prep.”

“I’m sorry, I think you might have the wrong person...” Izuku glanced around. He had no idea who this woman was!

“No, you’re definitely the woman I’m looking for.” The woman held up her phone to Izuku—on her screen was a photo of him from earlier, when he’d been at the MOTC booth. “The guy you were talking to earlier, with purple hair? He asked me to come get you.”

“O-oh. He wants me? Really?”

“Yeah. He said something about completing the pair. Sorry to have to ask you this, but you were already planning to attend the panel, right?”

“Yes! That’s why I’m in line!”

“Perfect. If you don’t mind coming with me, then?”

“I-I mean, okay, if they want me to participate, then sure!” Izuku followed the woman out of the line; multiple people whined or cheered for Izuku, wishing him a good time or bemoaning his luck at getting chosen for a special purpose.

They headed toward a staff door, leading into a long hallway. Just inside the door was the same purple-haired man from earlier. “Thanks, Jirou. I’ve got it from here. You go get Mr. Cobb.”

“Right.” As the woman turned and headed out the door, the man gave Izuku a short bow and held out a business card. “I’m Shinsou Hitoshi; I’m one of the art designers for the Japanese team with Mages of the Coast. And what is your name?”

“My name is Midoriya Izuku. It’s a pleasure to meet you! I’m a big fan of your work! You did the art for the latest reprint of Mind Jack, right?”

Shinsou nodded. “That’s right. I didn’t know my name was so recognizable.”

“Oh, I’ve been following you on Twitter for a while now, actually! I built a mill deck and Mind Jack was one of the staples for it.”

“Well, thank you for the support. I appreciate it.”

“Yeah!” Izuku smiled widely. “So, um, what exactly did you ask me to come back here for?”

“Oh, did Jirou not tell you?” When Izuku shook his head, Shinsou continued, “We would like you to join us on the stage alongside our Gilbert Cobb for the panel. You’ll be hyping up the crowd, throwing out swag, that sort of thing.” He gestured over to a box of plastic-wrapped items, like lanyards and wristbands, as well as a handful of baskets full of promotional Mystic: Ascending packs.

“Oh, wow! Yeah, I’d be honored to help you out!”

“Thank you so much. You’ll be paid for your time, and you’re welcome to take some of the promotional materials as well.” Shinsou glanced behind Izuku as he spoke. “And speak of the devil, here’s Mr. Cobb now.”

Izuku turned to look over his shoulder—nearly tripping himself over the sight of a handsome blond in an absolutely perfect Gilbert Cobb cosplay. Everything was impeccable, from the fur around the collar of his cape to the way his broken sword glinted realistically, as if it was made from real metal. But what surprised Izuku more than anything was that he recognized the man.

“Kacchan?”



Katsuki hefted his sword and posed for another photo with a younger boy of around 14. “Thank you so much!” he said as he ran back to his mother.

Katsuki nodded, waving the boy off. When he looked over at the line of people waiting for pictures, however, he realized Ears was putting up a sign and talking to those in line. “Sorry,” she said. “Mr. Cobb has to go get ready for the Mages of the Coast panel. He’ll be back after the panel ends at 3! Feel free to stay in line if you want, or to enjoy the rest of the convention until he comes back.”

Those at the front of the line frowned; Katsuki could hear them debating the merits of leaving one person to wait while the others looked around. Ears walked over to lead him behind the curtain before they proceeded down a narrow passage between booths to get out of the large conference hall. “Oh, by the way, you’re gonna have an assistant at the panel,” she told him.

“The fuck do I need an assistant for?” he asked with a sneer.

“Well, we’re in the largest panel room—do you really want to give more than 500 attendees their swag all on your own?” Katsuki’s anger faded and his face went a bit pale at the thought of having to deal with that. “Thought so. Shinsou found someone cosplaying Kerrian Dayne and asked them to help out.”

“Better be a professional. I don’t want to be affiliated with some fucking amateur.”

“The costume looks great. Very high quality, if that’s what you’re worried about.” They stepped through a set of double doors into a darkened area behind the stage. Troll Doll was standing there with a young woman with longer, curly green hair and a green corset over a white dress. Katsuki spotted a hint of red boots under the hem of the dress, while a sword—the other half of Gilbert Cobb’s sword, rent in two by the evil dragon Feltan Tolar—rested against the ground by her side. It was the outfit from the card art for “Kerrian Dayne, Scion of the Woods,” which came out in the same set as “Gilbert Cobb, Scion of Flames.”

He heard Troll Doll say his character’s name, and the Kerrian Dayne cosplayer turned around to

reveal delicate features and wide, sparkling green eyes. Katsuki's breath caught in his throat at the sight.

And then he immediately scowled, because he didn't have time for romantic bullshit. He was a busy man and his focus was on his work.

But the word that dropped from the other cosplayer's lips gave him pause. "*Kacchan?*" He hadn't heard that name since...

"Deku? I thought you were a guy, when did you grow tits?" Katsuki blurted out.

"Cosplay isn't about having fun, shitty nerd. It's about being the best. The best materials, the best craftsmanship, the most screen- or art-accurate designs. If you can't put your all into it, then it ain't fuckin' worth doing."

"I disagree. And clearly, the person who didn't 'put their all into it' got hand-picked to join *you* on stage, so I'd say that's a point in my favor."

Katsuki spluttered a bit as he took a half-step back from Izuku. "Yeah, well... They only asked you because you're the other Scion riftwalker from the Classic Rivals expansion. It's natural to have Gilbert Cobb and Kerrian Dayne together."

// Izuku and Katsuki were far and away the biggest hits as they passed out the swag: pins, lanyards, and promotional booster packs disappeared like hot cakes.

Deku's cheeks flushed bright pink under the light sheen of makeup on his face. "I am a guy!" he cried out.

"You are?" Shinsou asked curiously. He blinked a few times before looking Izuku up and down. "Very convincing crossplay. What do you use up here?" Shinsou gestured to his own chest.

"Oh, um, I have some inserts I wear... a-anyway, Kacchan, what are you doing here? I didn't know you were into cosplay! Your costume is amazing!"

"Yeah, no shit. I only use the best materials and I make everything by hand. What about you?"

"Well, my mom and a friend of mine help me out a lot... I make all my own props, too! But my mom does most of my sewing."

"She knows you dress as a chick?" Katsuki propped a hand on his hip, nonplussed.

Deku's cheeks went even more red, his freckles disappearing under the flush. "She knows it's just a costume, Kacchan. And besides, what does it matter if I dress as a male or female character, as long as I'm having fun?"

"That may be true," Shinsou interrupted, "but... well, actually, yeah. That's pretty much it. Surprise, the big announcement is that we're re-releasing a special selection of Classic Rivals cards, along with some other older expansions, in a new set coming out early next year. Gilbert Cobb, Scion of Flames, and Kerrian Dayne, Scion of the Woods, are both included in the re-release, so when we saw Midoriya's outfit we knew we had to have him as part of the panel."

"That sounds amazing!" Izuku smiled brilliantly; Katsuki felt something twist deep in his gut at the sight.

"Midoriya, when everything's done here, let me get your address. We'll send you a full set as thanks for taking time out of your day to participate."

His eyes widen, somehow sparkling in the low light of the backstage area. "Really? That would be amazing! Thank you so much!"

"Please, we're the ones who should be thanking you. It's really fortunate that you picked this exact outfit to cosplay in."

"Well... there's kind of a story behind it..." Shinsou blinked curiously, so Izuku continued, "Kacchan

and I have known each other for years. When we were little, we both started playing Mystic: Ascending around the same time. Classic Rivals was actually the new set when we started, and we both used our pocket money to get booster packs. One day, we both happened to pull holographic Riftwalker cards at the same time. I pulled 'Kerrian Dayne, Scion of the Woods'—"

"And I pulled 'Gilbert Cobb, Scion of Flames,'" Katsuki finished before Izuku could. "I still have that card, you know."

"I still have mine, too. So when I heard that there was a big announcement being made at Gamescon, I knew I had to come, and there was no costume better than Kerrian Dayne to be my first Mystic: Ascending character."

"Wow... that's incredible luck. Do you realize the odds of that happening are astronomical?" Shinsou asked.

Izuku nodded. "Yeah. I did the math at one point, but I can't remember exactly what it is. But it's... it's up there."

Another man, blond and sparkly, stepped over to the group. "They're about to open the doors for the participants. Are you ready?"

Shinsou glanced over at Izuku and Katsuki. "Do you two know what you're doing?"

"Of course, shit ain't rocket science. We pose for photos and throw the swag out into the crowd whenever you give the signal."

"Midoriya, are you alright with that?"

Izuku nodded in confirmation. "I'll just follow Kacchan's lead!"

"Damn right you will, Deku. You always did follow behind me when we were growing up, didn't you?"

"You *were* pretty brilliant, Kacchan. You were amazing."

"'Were?' I think you mean, 'are,' shitty nerd."

"We'll see about that, *Mr. Cobb*." Izuku sashayed

past Katsuki, holding his sword in one hand and scooping up one of the swag baskets with the other. Katsuki found himself staring after Deku for a long moment before he came to his senses and darted after him.

The panel was a rousing success. Izuku and Katsuki were far and away the biggest hits as they passed out the swag: pins, lanyards, and promotional booster packs disappeared like hot cakes. The panel was designed to emulate a talk show, with a popular Mystic: Ascending web content creator acting as "host" while the MOTC staff were the "special guests." The audience got to have a question & answer session, as well, with participants getting extra swag. The panel ended with a big giveaway of some prize packs to a handful of lucky winners.

Following the panel, Shinsou looked over at Izuku. "Do you have any plans after this?" he asked. "Any other panels or events you want to attend?"

Izuku consulted his phone schedule. "Well, there was one panel on the history of Western comics' influence on manga since the 1950s, but I'm probably already too late to get a good seat. Why do you ask?"

"We were hoping you wouldn't mind coming back to the booth with us and posing for photos with Bakugou here. The two of you look amazing together, so we'd like to get some official photos with our backdrop and everything. But it's completely up to you."

"I want to do it! I never got a chance to get my picture taken with Kacchan, anyway."

"Perfect. We really appreciate it, Midoriya."

"Oh, it's my pleasure!"

Jirou led the two cosplayers through the back hallways to avoid the crowds, while Shinsou and the rest of the MOTC staff headed out through the front.

As they walked, Katsuki glanced over at Izuku. "So..."

"So... is this your social media account, Kacchan?"

Izuku had pulled up @kingexplosion online and was flicking through the images. “I can’t believe I never realized it was you! I follow your account!”

“Wait, you do? Since when?”

“I think I started following you... five years ago, maybe? You weren’t nearly as big back then, but I thought your costumes were amazing! You hardly ever show your face, though.”

“Yeah, ‘cause the emphasis is supposed to be on the *costume*. I know I’m hot, I don’t need shitty extras telling me that.”

“You really are, though!” Katsuki promptly choked on his own saliva at the response. “I-I mean, you wear a lot of tight-fitting or shirtless costumes, so... it’s hard to argue that you *aren’t* hot. A-anyway! What I’m trying to say is, I’ve seen the progression of your costumes, and when you were first starting out, you didn’t always use the highest quality materials either! Your first set of armor was made out of foam, just like a lot of people!”

“Like you have room to talk? Your fake boobs probably cost you more than the rest of your costume put together. What’s your sword made of, anyway—cardboard or something?”

“I’ll have you know it’s Wirbla laid over carved insulation foam,” Izuku replied defensively. “Following one of *your* recommended tutorials, I might add. My mom may sew my costumes, and my friend helps me with makeup, but all my props are my own.”

“Okay, I’ll give you that. The paint and dry-brushing look pretty good. But nothing will ever top real metal for a sword.”

“How heavy *is* your sword, anyway?” Izuku asked. Wordlessly, Katsuki held it out to him; when Izuku took it, he nearly staggered under the weight. Katsuki snorted as he took it back and hefted it over his shoulder. “Wow... That’s impressive! You carry it so easily!”

“Of course I fuckin’ do. I’m the professional here. If I couldn’t carry around a sword all day, I wouldn’t have used real metal.”

Jirou opened the door to the conference hall, ushering the two inside. “All right, I’ll leave you two alone. Bakugou, you know how to get back to the booth from here, right?”

“Yeah, yeah, I got it.” Katsuki waved her off. Rolling her eyes, she disappeared back down the hallway as the door shut. “C’mon, Deku, we gotta go. We’re gonna be swamped all evening because of you.”

“*Me*? Why is this my fault?”

“It’s your fault ‘cause you had to show up in that shitty dress and make people think we’re together, *which we’re not*, and now everyone’s gonna want photos of us doing coupley stuff.”

“Do you really think my dress is shitty, Kacchan?” Izuku asked quietly. “My mom and I worked really hard on it...”

“Wh-what? Fucking hell, it’s a figure of speech, Deku! Your dress isn’t shitty, it’s...” He trailed off, rubbing the back of his neck. He mumbled something under his breath as his cheeks burned red.

“What was that?”

“I said you look cute, alright?” Katsuki exploded; Izuku took a half-step back, blinking in surprise. “Your dress is nice, your makeup is good, you’re fuckin’ cute!”

“W-wow... thank you, that’s...” It was Izuku’s turn to blush, though he wasn’t sure if it was embarrassment or something else.

“So anyway. We should, uh. Probably get out there for photos.”

“Oh, right! Photos. Yes.” Izuku pushed a lock of his curly extensions behind his ear as they made their way back to the MOTC booth.

The rest of the afternoon passed by in a blur of camera flashes and poses. Izuku got plenty of his own pictures, which he posted on his social media account @smallmight. He made sure to tag Katsuki in each one.



MYSTIC ASCENDING



*Mellow
Daydreams*

As he'd predicted, there were more than a few people who wanted "shippy" pictures of Gilbert and Kerrian. Some of them were fun (like the one with him holding her at bay while she tried to hit him) while others were just embarrassing (like Gilbert with his arms wrapped around Kerrian's waist while he stood behind her).

Finally, the crowds started to thin out as the convention wound down for the day. Everything officially closed down at 8, but MOTC made the executive decision to let Izuku and Katsuki go early. "Thanks so much for agreeing to spend time with us, Midoriya," Shinsou added. "Keep an eye out for a package, alright?"

"Will do! Thank you all so much! It's been an honor getting to meet all of you!" Izuku bowed profusely to all of them.

As he started to gather up his things, Katsuki stepped over to him. "Oi, nerd. Got plans after this?"

Izuku glanced down at his phone. "Not really... I was just going to get a bite to eat and then head home. Why?"

"I was just thinking... we should catch up, or something. If you want. We could go get dinner. Not like as a date, or anything, just—"

Izuku smiled and put a hand out to stop Katsuki's words. "That sounds nice. Let me text my friend to let her know what I'm doing."

Katsuki nodded. "I've got a hotel room upstairs, so I'm gonna go get changed. Did, uh, did you bring a change of clothes?"

"No; I probably should have, but I didn't think I was going to go anywhere else after this. I'll be okay, though!"

"You sure? You can borrow some of mine if you want."

"Really? That's so nice of you!" Izuku smiled and Katsuki had to turn away to avoid flushing again.

"Tell you what, come on up to my hotel room with me and I'll find you something."

"Sounds good! Thanks!" Katsuki and Izuku headed toward the elevators that took hotel guests to their rooms. Katsuki fished his room key out of his pocket to open his door, ushering Izuku inside before he followed.

"Okay, let's see here... my jeans probably won't fit you, are you okay with sweatpants?"

"I'm fine with anything, really." Izuku replied. Katsuki nodded; he dug through his suitcase until he unearthed a pair of charcoal gray sweatpants that were a little too short for him, so he typically wore them to sleep in. He tossed them to Izuku along with a black tee. "There, try those on."

"Right. I'll, uh, go into the bathroom." When Katsuki nodded, Izuku ducked into the space and quickly shut the door behind him. Setting the clothes on the countertop next to the sink, he set to work carefully unclipping the extensions from his hair. Once they were out, he fought to get the lacing undone on the back of his corset so he could slip it down over his hips. The dress came off a lot more easily than the corset, thankfully.

A few minutes later, Izuku had Katsuki's clothes on. The red boots were an odd pair with the tee shirt and sweats, but they were the only shoes he had and he highly doubted Katsuki's would fit him.

Looking at himself in the mirror, Izuku debated whether or not to wash off the makeup. He liked the way it made his eyes and lips stand out, but would Kacchan think it was weird without the hair and the dress? For that matter, would Kacchan even like him like this...?

It's not a date, Izuku admonished himself. We're just catching up. It's a common thing for people who haven't seen each other in years. It's fine.

"Oi, Deku, you ready?" Izuku practically jumped out of his boots at the sound of Katsuki's voice; his cheeks burned with embarrassment at the errant thoughts that had been running through his mind.

"Y-yeah, just a second!!" Izuku rushed to fold up his clothes neatly so they wouldn't wrinkle.

"What's got your panties in a twist?" Katsuki asked through the door.

“Nothing!” Izuku swept the question under the rug as he hurried out of the bathroom. He put his phone and wallet in his pants pockets before stuffing his costume in his yellow backpack, which was already bulging with his con haul.

Katsuki caught one look at Deku in his clothes and quickly turned away from the shorter man. He crossed the room to grab a black leather jacket, in an effort to hide the way his face flushed and his heart raced at the sight of his middle school crush in his clothes.

“Ready to go?” Izuku asked.

Katsuki nodded. He’d changed into a pair of jeans and a black tank top with a flannel shirt over it. “Here, you might need this,” he said, picking up a fleece jacket and holding it out to Izuku. “It’s chilly out.”

“Oh, thank you...” Izuku took the jacket and slid his arms into the sleeves. It swamped him a little, but he liked how soft it was. Slinging his backpack over his shoulder, he followed Katsuki out the door.

// One bowl of ramen became two, became a couple of beers.

“So where did you and Auntie move to, anyway?” Katsuki asked while they headed down to the lobby once more. “All the hag would tell me was that you left after middle school to be closer to your dad.”

Izuku nodded. “Yeah, we did... We moved north to Hokkaido, but mom and dad just spent too much time apart before that. They could barely stand to be around one another, so they ended up divorcing after I graduated high school... I think mom only stayed with him so he would pay for my cram school tuition.”

“Oh, damn. I’m sorry to hear that.”

Izuku shrugged. “It’s fine. Uh... mom found out after the divorce that he was seeing another woman, anyway. So dad’s remarried now and mom is seeing someone else too. She’s really happy and the guy she’s seeing is great. Plus, it gave me an excuse to get my own place after I graduated from university.”

“Nice. Big place?”

“It’s pretty good-sized, but I have a couple of roommates—my best friend, who is the one who does my makeup for my cosplays, and another mutual friend of ours from college. What about you?”

“Oh, I have a place all to myself,” Katsuki replied. “I roomed with some friends while I was in university, but got my own apartment after I graduated. It’s fucking amazing not having to worry about cleaning up after anyone else’s messes.”

Izuku chuckled. “I bet. My roommates and I trade off chores, so everyone pitches in.”

“God, I *wish* my roommates would have done that. Swear to God it felt like I was rooming with fucking *kindergarteners* when I was in university. I was the only one who fucking knew how to do laundry or cook worth a shit. The only chore they did consistently was washing the dishes, because if I didn’t have things to cook with, they didn’t eat.”

Izuku couldn’t help but laugh at the mental image. “What, didn’t they like takeout?”

“Oh no, they love the shit. Only problem was, I’d throw it away if I found it in the fridge. It didn’t take long before they were properly trained to wash their dishes.”

“Well, at least they learned how to do that much,” Izuku replied. “Honestly, none of us cooks that well. Ochako-chan and Tsu-chan are trying, but Tsu is a vegan and it’s just really hard to make something she’ll eat that Ochako and I will eat, too. Ochako is more willing to try vegan dishes than I am. I just really love meat, and I do a good amount of physical labor in my work so I need protein.”

“Holy *shit*, you’re just as much of a motormouth as I remember,” Katsuki said as they stopped in front

of a ramen place advertising all-you-can-eat bowls. "Is this good?"

"Yeah, this is great! Thanks!" He mentally calculated how much money he had left after his merch purchases. He could probably afford to get one bowl, maybe with extra meat...

"My treat," Katsuki added gruffly.

Izuku's eyes shot wide at the comment. "What? You really don't have to—"

"If I didn't want to do it, I wouldn't have offered, shitty nerd. So just accept it and let's go inside." Izuku's cheeks flushed in embarrassment, but he nodded and followed Katsuki into the restaurant.



One bowl of ramen became two, became a couple of beers. They caught up on each other's lives and recalled stories from their youth; talking about anything and nothing at all. When they left the ramen place, they migrated down the street to an izakaya, where they had more to drink—all on Katsuki's dime, using the cash he'd gotten from MOTC for the event—and continued to talk.

"You know, I never got to ask. How'd you get into crossplay, anyway? If you've bought falsies, this ain't your first time wearing a female character's costume."

Shrugging his shoulders, Izuku replied, "It's not that big of a deal, really. It's just a costume. I've always been on the small side, you know? I started out doing younger characters, teenagers and stuff. Then one night, Uraraka asked if I'd let her record a video doing my makeup. It got a ton of views online and a lot of people said I looked fantastic.

"Not long after that, I stumbled across an article talking about the growth of crossplay, both women cosplaying as male characters and men cosplaying as female characters. I remembered how much makeup had changed my facial shape and decided to give it a try. I got more attention for my first Card Captor Sakura cosplay than I'd ever gotten as Kid Trunks or Boruto. It made me feel really good, you know? And the more positive feedback I got, the

more energized I was to create costumes."

"Yeah, I know the feeling. I usually get the drive to do a big project, like working with EL wire or metal welding, right after I introduce a new outfit."

"Glad to know I'm in good company, then," Izuku said with a smile. He glanced down at his phone—eyes widening when he saw the time. "Oh no! If I don't hurry I'm going to miss the last train. I'm so sorry, Kacchan!"

"Don't worry about it, Deku. It's been fun."

"Thanks again for the dinner and drinks! I'll get you next time, okay?"

"Sure, sure. Oi, you still have my number?"

Izuku winced. "Oh... sorry, Kacchan, actually I got a new number when my parents divorced and mom and I got our own phone plan. I don't have your number saved anymore."

Katsuki pursed his lips together. "Makes sense. Well here, give me yours and I'll text you."

"Really?" Izuku grinned and took Katsuki's offered phone, saving his phone number and email under "Deku" before handing it back. "Here you go. Thanks again! Have a good night!"

Katsuki sighed and watched Izuku head out the door before getting up to head back to his hotel. As he got into the room, he heard his phone chime with a new message.

D Thank you again, Kacchan. For everything. I had a lot of fun today and it was amazing getting to meet the artists and staff!

K: You said that already, nerd.

D: I know... I just wanted to thank you personally.

D: I know you played a part in me getting the opportunity today. And I appreciate it.

K: As much as I'd like to take credit for that, it wasn't me, I swear. It was simply a case of right place, right time.

D: If you say so...
D: Well, have a good night!

K: You too, Deku.

Katsuki sighed and flopped back into bed. The day had definitely been... interesting. But in a good way.

Maybe he'd see Deku at the next convention he went to. They could even coordinate costumes again. It would be fun.

Katsuki snorted to himself. When was the last time he'd thought of cosplay as *fun*? Deku was a bad influence.

Well... maybe not so bad.



GO!
PLUS
ULTRA!

All about Pastels



Pastel Decora Kei

Decora is all about the accessories!
There is no such thing as 'too much', so go all out!
Chokers, necklaces, bracelets, hairclips -
as long as its bright and cute!
Layering is key: combine tanktops with shirts, pants with skirts,
oversized shirts and pullovers are your friend!
As for makeup, cute bandages, stickers and glitter make the look complete!

Model: Midoriya Izuku



Pastel Gyaru Kei

Gyaru is coming back in style!
Tan skin, light hair and bright makeup, that's what Gyaru is all about.
The outfits should be cute, girly, fashionable and most of all - eye-catching!
Give it a modern twist by combining it with VSCO style accessories.
When doing your makeup, stick with bright nude lips and icy-bright shadows.

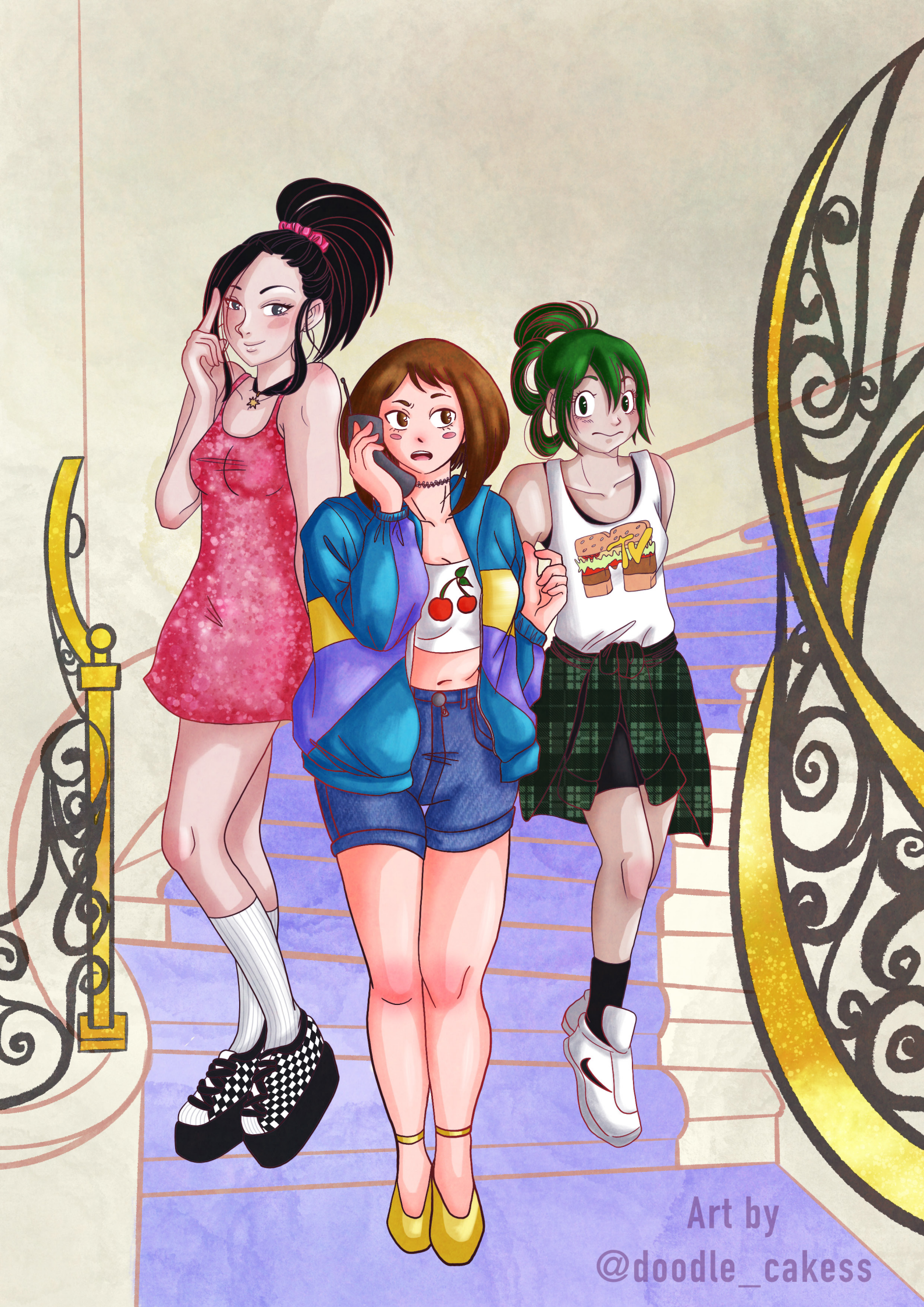
Model: Uraraka Ochako

A stylized handwritten signature in black ink.

dextra ♡
sinestra







Art by
@doodle_cakess

IF THE DRESS FITS

Ochako stared at the small line of dresses in her closet. A sigh slipped from her lips and she stepped back, letting herself flop onto her bed. She had never been one to have a lot of clothes, not because she didn't love shopping and dresses, but she could never really afford a wide variety of options. The clothes she did own were a collection of her favorites, and she wore them with pride.

However...

Nothing she had was going to work for this upcoming event.

Maybe that wasn't the best way to describe a date? Was it a date? Could she really call it that?

She groaned, pressing her palms to her eyes. What was she supposed to do?!

A knock on the door prompted Ochako to jump up. She prayed whoever was outside hadn't heard her distressed filled groans.

Swinging the door open, she saw Momo and Mina standing outside her room.

"Hi Ochako-chan!" Mina said, waving excitedly. "You ready for dinner!?"

Right. She was supposed to get food tonight with Momo and Mina. She hadn't remembered until

Emerald Waves

now, she'd been so focused on finding an outfit.

"Uhm... yeah..." she said slowly, but glanced to the side, her eyes falling once again on her closet. Maybe she should ask the girls. Momo and Mina always looked fashionable.

"Something wrong, Uraraka-san?" Momo asked, as formal as always.

"Well..." She twisted her lips stepping back into her room. She wasn't sure if she was ready to tell anyone Bakugou had asked her on a date, especially Mina. The second she told her, the entire school would know. Maybe she could just... avoid who she was going with and why?

Swallowing, she stared at her closet.

"I'm... going to this... concert," she explained slowly.

“Ooo, how fun!” Mina said, smiling brightly. “What’s the problem?”

“I don’t really... have anything to wear,” she admitted sheepishly. She rubbed the back of her neck, glancing sadly at her closet.

“Hm. That is a dilemma,” Momo said, stepping over to the open doors. Her hand slowly made her way through the clothes in Ochako’s closet. “What kind of outfit are you looking for?”

“Who are you going with?!” Mina asked, her lips pulled into a smile. It wasn’t innocent though, Ochako could tell. She had a devilish look on her face, as though she was about to start digging for information if Ochako wasn’t honest.

“I uhm...”

“Who?! Who! Whoooooooooooo?!” Mina repeated over and over, her voice far too eager. Ochako wished she hadn’t hesitated.

“I must admit, you do have me a little curious,” Momo giggled, turning to look at Ochako.

“Okay, *fine*!” She groaned, letting her hands flop by her side. “It’s... Bakugou.”

“BAKUGOU!?!” Momo and Mina exclaimed, their voices almost as loud as Bakugou’s was on a regular basis.

“Shh!” She hissed, flailing her hand up and down. “Yes! Bakugou invited me to a concert.”

“I was expecting you to say Midoriya!” Momo gasped.

“Me too! But Bakugou?! How did *that* happen?!”

Ochako tucked her hair behind her ear nervously. “I-I don’t know!” she said. “He asked me if I wanted to attend the concert with him and... I just... said yes?”

“Oh my gosh. I can’t believe it,” Mina squealed. “You’re going on a date with Bakugou! Bakugou Katsuki asked you on a *date*! I can’t believe *Bakugou* asked you on a *date*!” she said, repeating it over and over.

“It is a little surprising. Bakugou doesn’t seem like the type,” Momo admitted.

“I don’t know if it’s a *date*,” Ochako said, rubbing her hands together nervously. It kind of felt like one, but she really didn’t want to make any assumptions. Bakugou hadn’t said one way or another.

And really none of this mattered if she couldn’t find the right outfit for the outing anyway!

“Are you going alone?” Mina asked.

“I think so...” Ochako muttered.

“Oh then it’s *totally* a date!”

“Okay...” Ochako said, trying not to panic. Now she definitely needed an outfit!

“What’s wrong? Did you not want it to be a date?” Momo asked.

“N-No! I mean... that’s... confusing... I dunno... I just... the problem is I have nothing to wear!”

“Oh! Well don’t worry about that,” Momo said, a smile pulling across her cheeks. “We can help with that. Before we get dinner, we’ll go shopping!”

“My favorite!” Mina said, jumping up.

Ochako pursed her lips. She really didn’t have the money to be buying a new dress... but she really didn’t want to go to the concert looking like a total fool.



“Okay!” Momo said, smiling as she stood outside of the high-end fashion store. “No matter what we’ll be able to find something here!”

Ochako frowned, staring at the rows of fancy dresses in the window. She wasn’t sure Momo really understood what kind of concert this was. She wasn’t going to the orchestra or opera. It was a punk rock concert.

But Momo... looked so happy, her dark eyes wide with joy as she looked at the various floor length gowns.

"Come on!" Momo said, tugging on both Ochako's and Mina's hands pulling them into the store.

Mina glanced in her direction and Ochako could only shrug. She didn't want to ruin Momo's fun.

She pulled her to a rack of dresses. "You're a lot shorter than me, but I think we can find something cute. Pink is your color for sure! Though yellow could be cute! Oh! Or maybe orange and green to match Bakugou. Are you two going to match?" Momo was talking so fast, obviously very excited.

Now she really couldn't tell her this isn't what she meant.

Pulling a few long gowns off of the rack, Momo handed a long pink one to her. Ochako peered at the tag stuck to the dress and her eyes practically bugged out of her head. She wanted to faint. How could Momo spend so much money on ONE piece of clothing?! She could get an entirely new wardrobe with the price of this one dress.

She swallowed and glanced towards Mina. "Uhm... Momo!" Ochako said, running her hand over the smooth, silky dress. "Have you seen the price on this?" she asked.

"Oh! They are having a sale right now, so it'll be a good deal," she nodded, taking a few more before turning to face both of them.

"A sale? Uh... well... Okay..." Ochako said, looking at how happy Momo was.

"Great! Let's go try stuff on!" she said.

Ochako glanced at Mina who shrugged again. "No harm in trying it on right?"

"I guess not," Ochako muttered. "Don't these kind of stores get mad when you don't buy stuff after trying it on?"

"I don't think any store does that?" Mina laughed softly. "Come on, it'll be fun, I promise!"

"Girls! Come on!" Momo called out, waving to the both of them.

"Okay, okay," Ochako said. She thought maybe she should speak to Momo about putting a budget in place.

"Is something wrong?" she asked, as the two girls walked over.

"Well..." Ochako twisted her lips. Momo was so excited to take her shopping, Ochako really didn't want to let her down. "These are... really expensive."

It was embarrassing to admit to her friend this was something she couldn't afford. Especially since Momo obviously had no problem doing so. Even Mina didn't seem too thrown by the price.

"O-Oh!" Momo gasped, covering her mouth. "I'm sorry Ochako! I didn't even think about the price! I-I didn't ask for your budget."

"Also... it's technically a punk-rock concert," Ochako said.

"Oh gosh..." Momo said, cupping her cheek. "This was... a really horrible idea wasn't it?"

Ochako smirked and reached forward to squeeze Momo's hand. "Well, we can still try them on, can't we?"

"Hell yes!" Mina cheered, grabbing a few of the dresses as she rushed into a dressing room.

Ochako stepped inside of her own, smiling at Momo. She had never even thought to *try* on clothes like this. She knew she couldn't afford them, so what was the point of even trying when she knew she couldn't take it home.

The first gown was a blush pink, floor-length dress. It trailed all the way down to the ground and white lace covered the main bodice. She wished she had somewhere to wear this to, even though it was far too long for her.

She touched her hand over the bodice. It made her feel like a princess. She only wished there were a beautiful, sparkling tiara to put on her head.

Smiling, she attempted to twirl around, but she stepped on the bottom of the dress and fell into the mirror, smacking her cheek. "Ow..." she whined, pushing herself up. At least she hadn't ripped it or anything. She was certain this store would probably force her to buy it if she ruined it.

"You okay, Ochako-chan?!" Mina called out.

"Yeah... I'll come out!" Slowly she opened the door, finding Momo in a long floor length red halter dress; her signature color. She looked stunning of course, not surprising. Momo was probably one of the most beautiful girls Ochako had ever met. She was so humble, but she always looked amazing in the various clothes she wore.

Mina was also in a floor length dress. It was yellow, with an open back that dipped down.

"Wow! You guys look amazing!" Mina cheered. "I wish we had to go to a gala or something and could wear fancy dresses like this!"

Momo laughed. "I'm sure we all will be in the future when we're well known heroes!"

"Of course!" Ochako giggled. "I feel so awkward in this. I've never worn anything like it."

"Awkward? You look amazing. I mean it would have to be hemmed at the bottom, but you look really wonderful," Momo said, smiling wide.

"T-Thanks!" Ochako blushed, brushing her hand over the white lace. "But... I don't think this is a great outfit for a punk-rock concert."

"Not exactly," Momo laughed.

"Also I probably should get something more in my price range," Ochako giggled.

Momo gasped and pressed her hand against her chest. "We could go to the discount department store!"

Ochako and Mina blinked, staring at Momo. Was she really... excited about that? Sometimes it was hard to remember Momo had grown up very differently from the rest of them.

"W-We can do that!" Ochako said, still taken off guard. "I was thinking of going somewhere that has sort of... punk clothing."

"Oh my gosh, what if you got a cute lolita dress!?" Mina suggested, bouncing up and down. "You would look so adorable in something like that! Oh my gosh I can just imagine the look on Bakugou's face."

"Really?" Ochako said, blushing. "We could do that!" But she quickly turned toward Momo. "We could still go to the department store and try stuff on," she said, not wanting to disappoint her friend.

**Ochako
couldn't
help but laugh.**

"Well..." Momo smirked, twisting her hips back and forth. "It could be fun. I mean we're basically having a girl's night!"

Mina tilted her head, tapping her finger against her chin. "Do you think we should call Jirou? I feel like she would know the best thing to wear to a rock concert."

Momo's eyes widened. "Of course! I can't believe we didn't think to ask her!"

"Ochako-chan didn't tell us it was a punk-rock concert," Mina huffed, folding her arms over her chest.

"Oops!" she giggled. "Sorry... I thought I mentioned it but I got a little flustered about the fact that this is apparently a date..."

"Okay," Momo said, pulling out her phone. "I'll text Jirou to meet us at the department store, and we should change out of these dresses!"

"Okay!" Mina cheered, rushing back into the dressing room.

Ochako couldn't help but laugh. As much as this hadn't been what she needed, trying on the dress had been fun. She was looking forward to trying on more clothes with the girls.



The girls laughed as they made their way down to the department store. It had been awhile since Ochako had felt like a normal teenager. With how much training they did, they rarely had time for things like this. Not that she was complaining, of course she loved her hero training, it was her dream, it was all of their dreams, and they were actually achieving them.

Still, taking a shopping break was actually enjoyable.

Ochako didn't think the department store would actually have what she wanted, but she was happy to be with her friends. Kyouka would help them when she got there.

"Girls, whenever I walk into a department store, I feel like the possibilities are *endless*," Momo said cheerfully. "There are so many options!" She stood at the front of the store, as if the world in front of her was vast and expansive, like she was discovering a completely new world.

"Well, there are a lot of choices," Ochako said. It was so funny to her that Momo found such joy in something so simple as a cheap department store. To her, the fancy store had been far more interesting.

"Yeah, I mean... it's something," Mina shrugged, trying not to laugh.

"S-Sorry... I didn't mean it in a rude way," Momo said, rubbing her hands together nervously.

"Don't worry," Ochako said, gently touching her shoulder. "We know you didn't mean it like that. All new experiences are exciting. I mean, I've never been to a concert like the one Bakugou is taking me to and I'm pretty excited." She giggled.

"Yeah! We're here to have fun, aren't we?!" Mina said. "So let's have fun!"

Nodding to each other, the three girls ran off into the department store, pulling various clothes from the rack. Ochako only wished they had some sort of montage music to make the situation even better. She hadn't anticipated enjoying shopping this much; normally she didn't care for it. She bought the cheapest options and moved on.

Ochako grabbed comfy t-shirts and cute jeans from the racks of clothing in her size. Unlike the dresses, the department store was definitely more her speed, so she actually knew what she was looking at.

It didn't take long for Mina to rush back over to her, holding a large stack of clothes. "I think it's time for the dressing room," she giggled. "I don't think I could hold anything else even if I tried."

"Same," Ochako said, glancing at the large pile of skirts draped over her hand.

"Where's Yaomomo?!" Mina asked, glancing around the store.

The girl walked up to them holding nothing, and both Mina and Ochako looked at her quizzically. She had been so excited to try on a variety of clothes and yet, she held nothing in her hand.

"Oh!" Momo gasped, catching on to their confused faces immediately. "A nice lady came by and started a dressing room for me!"

"I should've guessed," Mina laughed. "Yaomomo had so many outfits she couldn't deal with carrying them."

Momo blushed, shaking her head as the two girls followed her towards the dressing room. She opened the door, showing multiple outfits on hangers. A few cute summer shirts and sundresses hung in the stall, most in her signature red color. "It's not *that* much!"

"Sure," Mina shrugged. "Let's change!" She swung the door next to Momo's dressing room open, and Ochako followed suit.

She knew she wasn't going to buy any of these clothes, despite how adorable some of the skirts were.

Stroking her hands over the bottom of a short and frilly orange and pink one, she sighed. Ochako wished she could buy all the clothes she loved, but it just wasn't possible. Besides, it was silly... she wouldn't wear something like this on a daily basis, not when she had to wear her uniform all the time.

She pulled on the skirt anyway and a light pink top that slung across her shoulder. Stepping out of the dressing room, Mina and Momo were waiting for her. Momo had on a pair of leggings and a red top that scrunched in the middle. Mina was wearing a long yellow sundress and a straw hat.

"So?" she asked, twirling around. "It's very summery, don't you think!?"

"So cute!" Ochako cheered, looking at the way the dress hugged Mina's curves and highlighted her

"You made it!" Momo said, clapping her hands together happily.

"Yaomomo is shopping at a discount store?" Kyouka asked, raising her eyebrows at her friend.

"Yeah this is her favorite thing to do," Mina snorted, wrapping her hands around Kyouka's neck to pull her into a hug.

"Okay, but I thought you were shopping for something for Ochako cause she was going to a concert." Obviously, this wasn't concert wear.

"We were waiting for you!" Ochako said, jumping in. "Momo took us to a dress store-"

"Yeah," Mina snorted, "but it was more for an orchestral concert, not a rock one."

// Ochako grabbed comfy t-shirts and cute jeans from the racks of clothing in her size. Unlike the dresses, the department store was definitely more her speed, so she actually knew what she was looking at.

gentle pink skin color.

Momo sighed, gently touching her shirt. "I didn't expect this to be so comfortable!" She giggled. "Should I get this? The pants are amazing!" She tugged on the material and it slapped against her leg. "The fabric is so soft!" She stared at it in the mirror, turning around to check out how she looked from behind.

"I love seeing Yaomomo trying on commoners clothes, she's so surprised they're basically the same as her high quality ones," Mina whispered.

Ochako giggled, she wasn't so sure if that was true. Some of Momo's clothes were so beautiful, like nothing Ochako had seen before. That wasn't to say this outfit didn't look cute on her as well.

"What are you guys doing?" A familiar voice echoed in the doorway and Kyouka stood, leaning against the entrance.

"Jirou-chan!" Mina cheered.

Kyouka snorted, a small laugh slipping from her lips. "Why don't you guys get changed and I'll take you to a store where you can actually find something to wear."

"Good plan," Ochako giggled, stepping back into the dressing room.

They all quickly changed, putting the clothes back on the racks as the girls made their way back into the mall.

"So why are you going to a rock concert anyway?" Kyouka asked.

Ochako opened her mouth to answer, but Mina was the first to speak. "Get this. She's going on a *date* with Bakugou!"

"Bakugou!?" Kyouka gasped. "Really?"

"L-Look... I don't know if it's a date! He basically threw the concert tickets at me and told me we

were going and I said okay!" she muttered.

"Sounds like the most Bakugou way to ask someone on a date if you ask me," Mina said, nodding her head sagely.

"Mm, it does seem strange. Maybe he thought you like this kind of music," Kyouka said with a shrug.

"But why wouldn't he ask you if he just wanted to go with someone who likes that kind of music," Momo asked.

"True..." Kyouka muttered. "Either way, I know just the store." She pulled Ochako in front of a large, gothic looking store, with various styles of clothing hanging in the window. "See?" She smirked, gesturing to the black dress in the front window, belts covering the lace bodice. "This is the type of dress you need."

"W-Wow..." Ochako said, blinking as she stared at the complicated looking outfit in front of her. "That's different."

"Trust me," Kyouka smiled, dragging her friend in.

The wall was lined with dresses, long dark ones, form fitting knee length dresses with hoops and belts, and frilly Lolita style ones as well. Ochako had always wondered what she would look like in something like this; she supposed she was going to find out.

Momo looked completely out of place, staring at the various styles. "These are so incredible!" she gasped, brushing her hands over the fabrics. "Such good quality too!"

"Yup! Let me know what catches your eye."

Ochako's eyes scanned the various dresses. She had never thought about wearing something like this, so she had no idea how it would look.

Momo held up a vest with fishnets and belts, underneath was a long white tank top. "This is so cool," she said, her eyes sparkling. It was, but Ochako wasn't sure if it really suited her.

Kyouka found a cute cropped black jacket with chains hooking the pockets together. It really

suited her though, not Ochako. Plus she wasn't sure if she was looking to buy a top and pants... a dress was far easier.

And Mina was on the other side of the room, her dark eyes excited by all of the various pink, fluffy dresses. They probably weren't cool enough for the concert.

Ochako supposed she could try on various things but...

Then she saw it. The most perfect dress.

It almost reminded her of her hero costume. The arms were long and black and had frilly puffed out sleeves at the end. There was a small layer of pink at the end, hidden beneath the main black sleeves. The bodice was pink, covered in tiny bows that trailed down the center. There was a covering of black lace over the skirt which was mainly pink. The neck was square and lined with pink frills and there was a small black bow right in the middle. There was also a pink and black headband draped around the neck.

"This is cute," she said, touching at the bottom of the skirt.

"Oo!" Mina gasped, playing with the sleeve. "This does seem very you!"

"I think the colors will suit you nicely!" Momo agreed.

"Hey!" Kyouka called out, waving to the store manager. "Can she try this on?"

"Of course!" The woman said, smiling. "Let's get you set up."

The woman pulled the dress in her size down from the wall and carried it toward the dressing area. The stalls were tall and black, graffiti purposefully painted onto the side. The atmosphere of the store was really perfect for what Ochako needed and she prayed this dress looked good.

"Do you need help with the corset back?" Momo asked, touching at the ties.

"Probably," Ochako laughed. She'd never worn

anything so fancy, besides the dresses she had tried on with Momo just an hour ago. "Let me get it on and then you can help!"

She took a deep breath staring at herself in the mirror. She really hoped this looked cool in the way she wanted. She wanted to match whatever Bakugou would probably be wearing. If it was a date, she wanted to look cute.

She pulled the dress up, slipping her arms into the sleeves. The bodice did make her boobs push up, and she blushed, not used to seeing her cleavage accentuated. Still, the bows were cute and there was just the right amount of lace and frills.

Sliding the curtain to the side, she smiled, holding the headband in her hand. "It's pretty cute."

Momo gasped. "Ochako-chan! You look adorable! Turn around and we can finish the back!"

She nodded, feeling her cheeks flush. She twirled around, feeling the bounce of the bottom of the skirt brush against her thighs.

Slowly, Momo began to lace her up, each tug pulling the dress tighter. It wasn't suffocating her, but it fit her nice and snug. She assumed that was how it was supposed to be.

"There," Momo said, tying the final piece into a small bow. "It looks so cute!"

"Put the headband on!" Mina cheered.

Ochako's fingers gripped the sides and she slid it onto her head, the pink ribbons mixing in with her brown locks.

"It's perfect," Kyouka smirked. "Good choice."

"You look like a goddess!" Mina cried out, lunging forward to hug her friend. "You gotta see yourself." Tugging on Ochako's arm, Mina pulled her toward the mirror. "Look, look, see?! See!? You look so cute!"

Ochako couldn't deny that Mina was right. The dress hugged her hips, the lace spread out across her stomach and the skirt puffed out around her knees. The black and pink bodice fit her snugly

and her boobs were pressed up, showing off a decent amount of cleavage. She felt a little exposed, but the square cut was still modest enough to hide her skin.

"You have to get this one!" Momo said, coming to stand next to her.

Suddenly, Ochako froze, her heart sinking. She hadn't even looked at the price! There was no way she could afford an intricate dress like this.

"I... like it but... I have no idea how much it is," she said softly. "I probably should find something less detailed."

She turned to look at her friends who were glancing at one another. Mina smirked, cupping her hands behind her back as she stepped forward, "Alright, take that off, you're getting it."

// So it was a date then?

"What?" Ochako gasped. "But guys I—"

"Yup, you are!" Kyouka laughed.

"Basically, we're going to buy it for you and we won't take no for an answer!" Momo smiled.

"You guys, this dress is so—"

"Nope! Our girl is going to look *cute* for her date!" Mina said, wrapping her arm around Ochako's shoulders. "Besides, you're gonna pay us back by telling us all about it!"

"We should get her matching stockings!" Kyouka said, dashing back into the store's main room.

"Good idea!" Momo agreed.

"Y-You guys!" Ochako sniffed, trying her best not to cry. Her friends were far too good to her, wanting her to have a nice time. "I love you girls so much. Y-You really don't have to."

Momo gently touched her shoulder. "Ochako-chan, we want to. This dress looks perfect on you, and we want you to have a great time!"

"Plus, hearing about Bakugou's reaction is going to be priceless!" Mina laughed.

"You can say that again!" Kyouka smirked, holding up a pair of lace stockings with bows stitched into the pattern. "Bakugou isn't going to know what to do!"

Tears flowed freely down Ochako's cheeks. "Thank you girls," she whispered. "I... I can't express how grateful I am."

"A-Ah! Don't cry Ochako-chan!" Momo said, hugging her.

"Especially don't cry in the dress! You don't wanna ruin it!" Mina gasped.

"A-Ah!" Ochako frantically wiped her eyes, trying to avoid getting her tears on it. The girls laughed at her.

"C'mon, let's get you changed!" Momo said, starting to untie the back of the bodice.

"Thank you," Ochako repeated.

"It's fine!" Mina smiled. "Just remember you have to tell us every detail about Bakugou's reaction!"

She giggled softly, smiling at her amazing friends. She had never been gifted something so lovely, nor had she ever had friends who wanted to treat her to something so special. There was no way Ochako would ever be able to properly express her gratitude.

"I will tell you all about it."

It was the least she could do.



When Bakugou stood outside of Ochako's room to pick her up for the concert, he took a moment to stare.

It wasn't subtle at all. She saw the way his red eyes scanned her body and his cheeks flushed. It was probably a little shocking to see her wearing something so different from what she normally wore.

"Is something wrong?" she asked, rocking back and forth on the high heeled boots.

"W-what?! No!" he yelled. "I'm glad you got a cool outfit for this or whatever." He scoffed and lunged forward, grabbing her hand. "C'mon Cheeks, we gotta go." Their hands were locked together, and she expected him to pull her forward, but he didn't. He was staring again.

His eyes glanced over the skirt and traveled upward, following the bows up the pink bodice until... well... his cheeks grew even redder.

"Do you like it then?"

"Yeah, I'm glad my... date is going to look so damn cute- I mean, good! Whatever!" he snapped, growling as he squeezed her hand.

So it was a date then?

Ochako's own cheeks flushed as she stared at their hands locked together. She couldn't believe her friends had bought her such a lovely present. She was so grateful and she would cherish it forever. She hoped she could wear it many times, maybe on other dates with Bakugou?

She was pretty excited to spend the night with Bakugou, but she couldn't wait to tell her friends about his reaction to the dress. It had really been worth it all.

GO!
PLUS
ULTRA!



Art by
@doodle_cakess







FOR THE LOVE OF FASHION

“And our next guest up on Late Night with Present Mic is...” a drumroll plays, “Our Number One Hero, Midoriya Izuku!”

Katsuki spits out his tea as Izuku exits the curtains and strides over to Present Mic, shaking his hand. “What the hell is he wearing!?” Katsuki shouts at the television screen.

He takes in Izuku’s state of dress, grumbling as he watches the interview. What made *Deku* think he could walk in with grey sweatpants, a poorly worded gym tank that scoops too low, a hoodie and a backwards cap.

“What the actual *fuck*?!” He whispers aghast at Deku’s outfit. Did the nerd forget he had an interview? He looks like he went straight to the network studio from the gym. Hell, Katsuki just hopes that Deku *showered* before the damn interview.

He sees the look of astonishment on the host’s face as he takes in Izuku’s appearance; the crowd also laughs as the host continues to point out Izuku’s clothes, “Heading for a *late night workout* there Deku?”

Katsuki can’t focus on what’s being asked of Izuku, completely distracted by how *unkempt* the number one pro hero looks right now.

ERZA MIKAZUKI

He turns off the television when he can’t stand to watch anymore. Maybe it was just an off day, Izuku doesn’t usually look that bad.

Except. He was wrong.

Izuku looked worse in the following week’s interview. He crushed the beer can in his hand.

“Whoa, bro? You cool?” Eijirou asked him.

“No, I am not! Look at this shit!” He gestures to the TV screen.

“Oh, Midoriya’s outfit? It’s kinda cool! He let me pick out his last interview swag!”

“HE—HAS—RUFFLED—SLEEVES!”

“I think it’s manly! Taking it back old school.”

“TO THE MEDIEVAL TIMES?! And what is this shit, what do you *mean* you picked out his outfit?!”

“Whoa, chill out bro. And yeah, he asked for help that week, so, I did!”

“It was lame, who goes to interviews in sweatpants! It’s unprofessional!”

Eijirou shrugs, “I didn’t think it was that big of a deal.”

Katsuki throws his hands in the air, “He’s sitting in the top spot and you don’t think it’s a big deal how he looks?!”

“I mean, no? I think it makes him look easy going and approachable! Today’s outfit just makes him look cool, chilled-out, relaxed!”

Katsuki grumbles, talking to Eijirou about fashion is a lost cause. Katsuki sighs, takes a deep breath and changes the subject. He’ll let this one go, for now.



Nope. Nope, it was impossible to keep letting this go. Katsuki grit his teeth, his knuckles turning white from gripping the edge of the bar table. His eyeballs were bleeding at the mishmash outfit he was wearing.

Izuku was wearing *harem pants* with a geometric pattern that would put MC Hammer’s pants to shame. And his shirt, could that even be called a shirt? The V-neck was cut so low, if he leaned over he’d see Izuku’s belly button.

“Eyyy, he took my suggestion!” Sero exclaims.

Katsuki’s eyes snap open, “what the fuck did you just say?”

Sero repeats himself, “He took my suggestion?”
“Why, in the world, would the nerd ask *you* for fashion advice?”

Sero cocks his head, “Huh? Midoriya always asks us for outfit ideas for his public appearances, it’s all in the—oh, that’s right. You’ve muted our group chats.”

“You’re telling me, he dresses according to what you assholes throw at him?”

“Pretty much, he said he can’t be showing up in just one of his ‘t-shirt’ shirts; that’d be a faux pas.”

“Everything he’s worn so far has been the epitome of bad fashion, and he asks everyone!?”

“Ev-er-y-one,” Sero emphasizes.

That’s it. That was the straw that finally broke the camel’s back.

Katsuki closed his eyes, counting backwards from ten, exhaling.

After the show is over, Katsuki pays his tab and leaves Sero and the other extras at the bar. He gives himself a once over in the bathroom mirror before leaving for his last destination of the night.

BANG. BANG. BANG.

“Oi! Open up, nerd! I know you’re home already!” Katsuki hears fumbling followed by a rush of steps coming to open the door. Katsuki’s eyes immediately land on the harem pants.

“Ka-Kacchan?! What are you doing here?! It’s like midnight! Shouldn’t you be in bed already?”

Katsuki’s eye twitches, “Ya sure got a mouth on ya, smartass.”

He shoves Izuku aside and walks into the apartment, toeing off his shoes before going past the entrance. He immediately walks into the kitchen grabbing a bottle of water from the fridge, with Izuku floundering behind him.

“Hi? Hello? What are you doing here? Don’t just ignore me in my own apartment!”

“Listen nerd,” Katsuki rounds on him, cornering him against the counter, “Who the fuck is your stylist?”

“Stylist? I don’t—I don’t have a stylist. Unless you count our classmates,” he starts muttering.

“Well, they’re fired. You have a stylist now.”

“Who?”

“Me, asshole. We are going to fix your goddamn image, so we don’t see headlines like this!”

Katsuki pushes his phone into Izuku’s face with an article:

Pro-Hero Deku’s ever changing style: What fashion crime will he commit next?

Izuku’s cheeks tinge pink, “Ah,” he scrubs the back of his neck with one hand, “I, um, I didn’t know it was that bad? I don’t hang around the gossip sites.”

Katsuki bristles at that, snatching his phone back, “You *have* to be fuckin’ aware of all social media Deku. It affects your image! *Our* image. We’re THE *Wonder Duo*. What you do affects me too, asshole! Our top heroes should know how to fucking dress like a normal person instead of these *costumes* the extra’s have picked out for you.”

“They’re not costumes!”

“Well, they don’t look or feel like something you’d wear typically! They’re fuckin’ costumes! Listen here, nerd. Tomorrow, you and me. We’re fixing your pathetic excuse for a wardrobe. I’m tired of your shenanigans.”

“Are you sure? I mean, yeah sure okay, but like. Work? Aren’t you busy? You have time?”

“Oi, oi oi, you think I don’t have time for this shit? I’ll make time for this Deku, I can’t watch another one of your interviews without trying to claw my eyes out.”

“You—you watch my interviews?”

Katsuki grabs Izuku’s ear and twists, “That’s what you take from what I said? You’re a fuckin’ fashion disaster! I won’t be watching any more if we don’t fix this!”

“Ah! Ah, ah! Kacchan! Okay, okay! We’ll fix it! Please let go!!”

The blond releases him, “Good. Now, I’m going home. Be ready *Deku*, I’m raiding your closet

tomorrow and then we set a game plan.”

“My-my closet?”

“YES,” Katsuki swings the front door open, “we’re doing this from the ground up.”

“Ah, I better get to cleaning then.”

“Good. See ya nerd.”

“Good night Kacchan! I’m looking forward to tomorrow. Please take care of me!” Izuku bows respectfully.

“Tch, no need to be excited about it. It’s not going to be a walk in the park.”

And with that Izuku sees him off with a bright wave and a smile. Katsuki grumbles on his walk home, what exactly did he sign himself up for?



The following morning, armed with coffee in hand, Katsuki bangs on Izuku’s door once more.

Izuku opens the door with rubbing the sleepiness from his eyes and a yawn. Katsuki stares for a minute, *cute*, before shaking it off and going back to the mission at hand.

“Your hair’s a god damn bird’s nest, at least comb it before you answer the door! Did Auntie not teach you any manners?!”

“She taught me just fine Kacchan, must you yell so early?” Izuku yawns bigger as he moves to let Katsuki pass, “You’re going to rip my closet to shred anyways, what’s the point in trying to dress nicely when you’re just going to hate it?”

“...Fair point, let’s get started,” Katsuki reasons before thrusting another cup at Izuku, “Here, I figured you’d be a sleepyhead by the time I got here; it’s your favorite: a caramel latte.”

Izuku perks up with a smile, “Thanks Kacchan!!”

“Yeah, yeah,” he waves him off.

Taking off his coat and laying it over the back of the couch, Katsuki makes himself comfortable.

After some idle morning chatter and a fully awake nerd, Izuku brings him to his bedroom. It's a moderate sized room, a bit plain, Katsuki's surprised there's no All Might merch to which Izuku explained, "That's what the 'office' is for!" And shows him the adjacent room.

"I'm not here for a tour, let's get back to your closet."

Katsuki flings the closet door open and is immediately assaulted with a pile of clothes.

"Oops, sorry Kacchan, I thought I'd put those away properly!"

After he extracts himself from the pile of meme-shirts, he sets to work sorting through his clothes: a plethora of shorts, cargo shorts.

// Izuku comes out and models the clothes for Katsuki's sharp eyes.

Does he even own a pair of goddamn pants?

He chucks the meme-shirts onto the bed where Izuku sits. He admits they're quirky and *maybe*, *just maybe* he might be able to salvage them.

Izuku just sits and watches Katsuki, and the blond is glad he knew better than to 'help' Kacchan through his things.

Once everything is sorted from: horrendous, basic, passable and decent, Katsuki decides to question Izuku.

"What do you value more? Comfort or Style? Wait, I take that back, you don't value style at all. Let's start over. What kind of look do you wanna achieve?"

"Uhh," Izuku stares at him dumbfoundedly.

Katsuki rolls his eyes, "Seriously? It's like talking to a brick wall."

"Hey! You're asking someone that you clearly believe doesn't know how to dress themselves! So, dumb it down a little bit Kacchan."

Katsuki smirks, "So, you admit it? You're a useless Deku?"

Izuku bristles at that, "I'm not completely useless!! Just look at my rankings! It's just my fashion sense! Easy for you to say Kacchan your Mom's a *designer*."

"Yeah, yeah, whatever. Patterns or solids?"

"Uh, solids, some pattern is okay, but minimal at best."

"Then why the hell did you wear Tape Face's outfit?!"

"I didn't have a choice! He physically *gave* them to me."

"Tight-fitting or loose-fitting?" Katsuki switches topics.

"Doesn't that depend on occasion? I feel like I'd be okay with either, but if we're talking about daily wear then maybe loose?"

"Keep the breakdowns to yourself, I just need the answer."

"Kacchan! You're so mean!"

"Tough shit. Can I talk you out of those forsaken red-sneakers?"

"No! They're iconic to who I am!"

"Yeah, I figured, judging by the 12 pairs in your closet!"

Izuku huffs, "JUST LET ME HAVE MY SHOES! THE ONE THING KACCHAN."

"Okay."

“Huh?” Izuku looks bewildered, “really? You’ll let me keep them!?”

“Yeah, I will. I can work with that, under one condition.”

Izuku cocks an eyebrow, “And pray tell what is this *condition*.”

“Total control over everything you wear.”

“Deal.”

“What, that easy?”

“For someone that has no inkling of style, aside from sneakers, I accept.” Izuku holds out his hand, “Deal?”

Katsuki reaches his own hand out, “Deal.”

The two grasp each other’s hand firmly with a few shakes before Katsuki says, “Now hurry up, get dressed and slip on your *iconic* shoes. We’re going shopping.”



Katsuki takes them to Harajuku street; it’s the best place he can think of to get inspiration. Izuku’s too chill for fast-fashion stores, he needs something edgier. Izuku is the face of their generation, he’s already the embodiment of sunshine with his upbeat personality and blinding smile, his clothes shouldn’t push him into the corner of prim and proper. His clothes should be a statement; a contrast to his sunny disposition.

As he combs through the racks, Izuku brows furrow, which Katsuki catches out the corner of his eye.

“Problem, nerd?”

Izuku picks up a piece of clothing and holds it up, “I just....there’s so much...*black*. Where are all the colors?”

“Hey, you said you’d leave it to me. Trust me Deku.”

Katsuki picks something out, placing it against Izuku’s frame, “Hmm, maybe. Here, be useful, hold this.”

He continues picking up clothes, tossing them at Izuku. When he is satisfied he pushes Izuku into a fitting room while he waits outside.

As he sits on the seating area in the middle of all the fitting room cubicles, his phone pings.

He checks the screen, and it’s the social media application Birdie. It’s from one of those “gossip” accounts that Izuku referred to. Katsuki scoffs, at the insinuation that he reads gossip. Well, duh, you have to know what’s being said about you!

He clicks the notification, his eyes going wide.

Wonder Duo: Friends or Lovers?

The beloved wonder duo has been caught out & about shopping. Ground Zero found picking out clothes for Deku. Are these two finally admitting they’re in a relationship?

More info>>

Katsuki barks a laugh. The *audacity* of people, taking something innocent like shopping and flipping it—waaiiittt.

We could use this to our advantage, Katsuki thinks as he scrolls through the posted images of him picking out clothes and placing them against Izuku. *If we get him to trend on-line, we can erase his image of fashion-killer.*

A small smirk grows as he closes the app, he just needs the nerd to agree to pretend to date to drum up some controversy, for the sake of fashion of course.

Izuku comes out and models the clothes for Katsuki’s sharp eyes.

“God, you can’t even pair things well together can you?”

“Really? What did you expect?” Izuku deadpans. “You’re right, here let me show you.”

Katsuki shows what he had in mind for what he

chose, “We gotta start small, otherwise, you’re not gonna get a good feel for it. We need you to get used to a gradual change so you can adapt easier.”

Izuku nods as he takes out a notebook and a pen. “Oi, seriously?”

“Yes, I *need* notes Kacchan! You know this.” Katsuki leans into Izuku’s personal space, cheeks millimeters from touching.

“Ah, Kacchan??” Izuku blushes.

Nice one, Katsuki thinks before shrugging and pulling away, “What? I wanna make sure you’re writing down the right things.”

After they finish their purchases, Katsuki says, “Okay, let’s go back to your place. But let’s stop at a Konbini, I’m making lunch for us.”

“Oh, you don’t—”

“I don’t have to do anything Deku. *I want to.*” Katsuki pokes his chest with his finger. “Besides. I need to talk to you about something.”

“Ow, okay, okay,” Izuku concedes rubbing at his chest.

Katsuki walks alongside Izuku and carries the shopping bags instead of ahead, and that’s a damn feat in itself, even *if* Katsuki sees Izuku as an equal already as partners, it’s still one thing to walk in step with him. But, the more exposure they have from this shopping trip the better.

Back at Izuku’s place, Katsuki gets to work on making Izuku’s favorite: Katsudon. Izuku had lit up completely, leaving Katsuki unable to fight that warm feeling in his chest. But he shoves it down as soon as they start eating together.

“So,” Katsuki starts.

“Yeah, you said ya want’d ta me a’out sumthin’,” Izuku says with his cheeks full.

Katsuki whacks him on the head, “Don’t talk with your mouth full you heathen.”

Izuku hacks and coughs as he accidentally swallows his food as he gets hit.

Coughing he replies, “Ow, geez, Kacchan!

Whatever,” he rubs the top of his head, “what is it?”

“Let’s date.”

Izuku splutters the water he was drinking, “Wh-? Kacchan!?”

“Pretend date. Look,” Katsuki pulls out his phone showing him the latest update of them walking and going to the store together, “we need to use this to our advantage Deku. We can change public opinion of you from fashion disaster to fashion icon!”

“Don’t you think that’s kinda....especially when they find out we’re *not* dating. The fans would be so disappointed!”

“What the hell Deku? I thought you didn’t read gossip! How else would you know our relationship is a hot topic!”

“I hear things Kacchan. You don’t think I’ve had fans literally ask me if you’re my boyfriend? I don’t need a gossip site to tell me what I’ve heard first hand.”

“Listen Deku, you gotta go along with this.”

“I dunno Kacchan.”

“Do you trust me?”

“You know I do!”

“Then do this. For the both of us.”

“...Well, if you put it that way...okay. Fine, let’s do it your way, but if we get caught in a lie, and there’s public outrage with pitchforks and torches, don’t look at me. I’m just gonna say ‘told ya so’ when they burn us at the stake.”

“Christ Deku, we don’t live in the Dark Ages.”

“I’m just saying, prepare for the worst, if it comes to that.”

“What could possibly go wrong?”

They planned their first date, and Katsuki specifically picked the outfit he'd be wearing that day, and adjusted his own clothing accordingly.

It would be easy to start off with a gradual change versus shock the world with a new wardrobe, he wanted to make it look like Izuku was growing into his own.

“How do I look?” asked Izuku as he outstretched his hands.

He wore slacks that cut off at the ankle, with a slight drop crotch so it wasn't too fitted. Though, it didn't do much to hide the curve of Izuku's round butt. He wore a loose-fitted knit sweater that had a symmetrical pattern that started at the waist and arched slightly into the chest and he wore a cowboy hat.

It would be easy to start off with a gradual change versus shock the world with a new wardrobe, he wanted to make it look like Izuku was growing into his own fashion sense. It was a preppier look than what he usually wore, but Izuku seemed to like it judging by the smile on his face.

Katsuki walked up to him and tipped the hat back to expose more of his face, “Don't wear it flat like a baseball cap, You're hiding your face.”

“Ah, sorry Kacchan. I'll get the hang of this fashion thing soon!”

“Tch, yeah sure. C'mon let's go,” Katsuki offered his arm, to Izuku who looked at it hesitantly.

“Are we sure we wanna do this?”

“Yep,” he popped the 'p'.

They strode arm in arm out of Izuku's apartment and hopped onto the subway together to get to their destination. Katsuki wore a pair of slacks that he bunched and tucked into the tops of his mid calf socks, and a pair of sneakers. He paired the pants with a loose tee and a large green blazer over it. Atop his head was a beanie that completed his streetwear look.

On the subway, he kept Izuku close, noticing the number of eyes on them, and people secretly taking photos of them. *Yep, in no time, we'll fix Deku's viewer rating no problem*, he thought.

They arrived at a popular cafe; Katsuki had reserved an outdoor table for the two of them to give them maximum exposure. It was rare for Katsuki to smile, but when he looked across the table, he couldn't help but think, *'Damn, the nerd looks cute.'*

The way the hat positioned let his bangs hang loosely over his forehead, his freckled round cheeks on display to the world, and Katsuki would've never thought it ever, but he had to admit

**// Izuku pouts
but concedes,
much to Katsuki's
amusement.**

Izuku had cute *ears*. He pondered on whether Izuku should pierce them.

That was what was missing from Izuku's outfit, he realizes belatedly: the lack of accessories.

“We have to consider accessories for our next 'date',” he states matter of factly.

“Hmm, you mean like necklaces and rings?”

“Yeah,” Katsuki leaned in with a smirk, “how do you feel about piercing your ears?”

Izuku's fingers touch his earlobes absentmindedly, “I have always ...kind of...wanted them?”

“No time like the present. I think it'll look good with the new look we're going for.”

“What exactly would we call this new look?”

“Minimalist streetwear aesthetic.”

Izuku props his elbow on the table, resting his

chin in his hand, "How is it minimalist if I'm adding accessories?"

"Trust the process Deku. You need accents. Piercings would really make your face pop."

Izuku blushes brightly, "I-uh, I thought my freckles already made it pop."

"You're not wrong, you just need...something extra."

The waitress comes to their table bouncing with bubbly energy, but does not acknowledge who they are right off the bat; she takes their orders, and comes back with an appetizer 'on the house, from the staff.' They both look inside and see the staff in the open air kitchen staring, prompting the duo to wave at them.

After their meals are served and dessert is cleared, the waitress comes back with the check, shyly asking if it would be okay if she got their autographs and photos with them. Izuku was about to decline, until Katsuki said, "Sure!"

Izuku's jaw dropped as the girl ran-off to get a notebook and her cell phone.

"Kacchan," he whisper yells, "you *hate* photos."
"You gotta do what you gotta do," he waves Izuku off.

"You're unbelievable," Izuku huffs. But he still bashfully smiles at the waitress swooning over him.

"Your outfit looks so good Deku! I love the new look! It's fresh, different! I think it's a great change!" Katsuki watches as the blush blooms across those freckled cheeks. He watches Izuku flounder at the compliment.

"Ah, thanks," he sheepishly scratches his cheek, "I'm, um, experimenting."

"Keep it up! And you look great as usual Ground Zero!" The girl turns to Katsuki; he personally thinks he's an afterthought to her, but their mission *is* to get Izuku to gain attention.

"Thanks," Katsuki smugly smirks at the girl who blushes in response.

She thanks the both of them and turns to leave them, "No rush. Take your time!"

Katsuki swipes the bill as soon as Izuku makes a reach for it, "Nope. I got this one"

"Wh—" Izuku squawks, "Kacchan, no! Let me pay! You're helping me out, it's the least I can do."

"Nah, I asked. I pay. End of discussion."

Izuku pouts but concedes, much to Katsuki's amusement.

Once the waitress returns with his card, Katsuki does a quick assessment of their surroundings and yep, they've garnered quite a bit of attention. Katsuki gets up, with Izuku standing up and smoothing out his own outfit. Katsuki is staring patiently until Izuku looks up with a smile, and Katsuki's heart skips a beat.

Katsuki grabs Izuku's hand and leads them out of the restaurant. It must look like Katsuki is dragging him out the way Izuku stumbles in surprise; he slows his pace when they get out onto the sidewalk, holding hands, walking side by side. Izuku is found to be looking down with a blush.

"Oi," Katsuki squeezes his hand, "what's going on with you."

"We're—we're holding hands. In public," he stutters out.

"What is my hand gross?" Katsuki loosens his grip, but Izuku is quick to tighten it and squeeze.

"No! It's not *gross*. It's just, different? We haven't done this since we were kids."

How could Katsuki forget? That was a thing when they were kids. The thought fills Katsuki with an unfamiliar warmth; a warmth that reminds him of summers past, running through the woods holding Izuku's hand as the latter giggles and laughs brightly. He shakes his head looking at Izuku who has a soft smile on his face.

"Were you thinking about the summer before we got our quirks?"

Izuku's head snaps to look at him, blushing furiously red, "Uh, no?"

Katsuki smirks, "Liar, you could never lie to me."

Izuku tries to rip his hand away from Katsuki, but he just tugs it back, "Kacchannnnn," he whines, "stop teasing me!"

He doesn't bother stifling his laughter at all. He looks at the Izuku trying to hide his face with his hate. *Too fuckin' cute.*

He pulls Izuku to him, and wraps an arm around his shoulder as they continue back to Izuku's place. Izuku looks up from under the brim of his hat and Katsuki finds himself blushing lightly, coughing as he unwraps himself.

"Let's get you home Deku," Katsuki says quickly. "Kay, wanna watch a movie before you go?" Katsuki smirks when he looks at Izuku and flicks the brim of his hat, "Sure shortstack, let's watch a movie."



The next few weeks they worked out a schedule, shopping, dates, movies. They spent a lot of time together. As much as it's *supposed* to be fake dating, Katsuki didn't feel like anything about it is fake at all. There's something natural about being by Izuku's side. Picking out outfits for Izuku was fun, and finding a corresponding outfit to complement the nerd's had been fun.

When the PR team caught wind of the reports they were called into the office to discuss how they would proceed. They both agreed that they would be dating casually, but that it wouldn't be labeled as serious.

Each week Katsuki had been upping their outfit game, the most recent outfits had them trending on social media when they went out. They were becoming known for their signature monochromatic style that showed off their personalities.

Katsuki had taken to the hat he had picked out for Izuku on their first date, so he liked to slip it in every so often. The latest photo that had them trending as "best dressed couple" had Izuku wearing super tight black jeans with rips at the knees, a long white shirt that went down to his thighs with a printed graphic plastered on it, with a button up underneath. He wore a black bomber jacket with red tags, and his hat to top it off.

Katsuki had managed to talk him out of using his yellow backpack (it ruined the look he was going for dammit) and got him to use an oversized clutch. Izuku still looked polished, so Katsuki decided to offset that by going with a more relaxed look. He opted to wear a pair of black compression tights with black shorts over it, He wore a contrasting black button up to Izuku's and wore a black crewneck sweater with shiny black decals with the letters 'GZ' emblazoned on the front. He wore a baseball cap, a gold chain with a large grenade as a pendant and carried a matching white clutch. Katsuki also wore a pair of black and orange basketball shoes to complete his look. Katsuki was taking them to Shinjuku for maximum exposure.

There was a breakfast place that he wanted to check out anyways; and he found Izuku's company and appreciation for food to be worth it. Katsuki had to fight back the way his lip wanted to quirk up in a smile every time Izuku's face lit up with each bite of food. It was beyond cute. His round cheeks puffed out like a chipmunk's and the gleeful "Mmm" that escaped his throat and genuine giddiness over the flavors that exploded in his mouth.

Katsuki was a goner. This fake dating thing came so effortlessly to them, and yet to Katsuki it had been more real than any previous relationship he had. It would be easy to make this official, but he wasn't exactly *sure* how Izuku felt. Izuku seemed to reciprocate the sentiment; either that or Izuku somehow turned into one hell of an actor. But Katsuki couldn't be entirely sure.

He knew it was a matter of time to clear the air, and have 'the' talk with Izuku, but that was all blown away with a bombshell headline.

*Mindfreak polishes his look for a date with Deku?
Trouble in Paradise for the Wonder Duo?*

Katsuki nearly blows up his phone when he sees the blurry photo, but he knows. He *knows* that mop of curly green hair, the newly pierced industrial running through Izuku's ear. And he just knew that was Shinsou's dumb ass wavy purple hair. There was no doubt about it, and Katsuki feels a mixture of both hurt and anger.

Their relationship had gotten better, hadn't it?

They talked about everything; why hadn't the nerd mentioned anything about him?

But more than that, the idea of Izuku being in the headlines with another hero made his stomach churn uncomfortably. Oh did that nerd have some explaining to do.

He got up, grabbing his leather jacket and slipped on his boots as he headed towards Izuku's place, until his phone pinged with a message from the agency. He quickly read the message and sighed, pocketing his phone and continuing towards Izuku's.

At the front door, Katsuki could hear the frantic pacing of Izuku inside the apartment. Katsuki knocked with zero hesitation, and Izuku's fumbling footsteps rushed over. The door flung open and a hand grabbed him and pulled him in. Katsuki caught off guard toppled over the threshold, solidly landing atop Izuku who yelped falling back with a thud.

"What the hell Deku?!" Katsuki pushed off of Izuku, Izuku looked up at him dazed, shaking his head.

"Ah! Sorry, Kacchan! I might've used my quirk in panic!" Izuku sits up, rubbing the back of his head and looking at Katsuki sheepishly.

"Umm, you ...saw the gossip news I take it?" Izuku laughs nervously.

Katsuki rolled his eyes, "Yes, shitty Deku, I did."

"Ah, I'm—I'm sorry about that Kacchan."

"The hell Deku? We talk about everything. Why the fuck didn't you say anything about eyebags?"

Izuku waved his hands frantically in front of him, "I didn't hide it from you! It was a spur of the moment thing! I, he—he caught me after patrols! He said he wanted to catch up! I didn't think it meant anything!"

Katsuki breathed a sigh of relief; okay so, just friends. But that didn't mean Katsuki was in the clear. Setting that aside, he switches topics.

"Did you see the text message?"

Izuku solemnly nods, "I did, I didn't think one casual outing would be such a big deal. But..."
"But?" Katsuki's eyebrow lifts.

"BUT, if we *hadn't* been fake dating to begin with, this wouldn't have been a scandal."

"Oi, are you blaming me?"

"No! I'm just saying! Ah, what a mess! Why'd I agree to this?!"

"Calm down nerd. Let's see what PR has to say first."



"You want us to *what!*?" exclaimed Izuku.

"Calm down! This is nothing Deku."

"Kacchan! This *is* a big deal!"

"Not really Deku, just another talk show appearance. It's not new for you! You're on a few times a month," their PR Rep says.

Izuku gapes at them before shaking his head, "It's different! I've always been solo! Never had to go on stage paired with someone! Especially someone that's supposedly my boyfriend!"

"Damn Deku, your voice is going a few decibels past being heard. Calm the fuck down. This is fine. We're fine."

Their PR Rep nods in agreement, "I fully believe this will be water under the bridge in two weeks."

After being thoroughly prepared by the PR team, on what might be asked, on how they should answer questions regarding their relationship, Katsuki said fuck it and threw caution to the wind.

It was going to blindside Izuku completely, and Katsuki believes this could go either one of two ways. One, the nerd cries so hard his words are unintelligible; he's just too happy beyond words. Or two, Izuku will look like a gaping fish, mouth opening and closing unsure of how to react because he doesn't want to embarrass Katsuki.

Frankly, Katsuki's hoping it's the first. Izuku *had* to reciprocate the feelings if the last few months were anything to judge it by. Okay, it *is* possible the nerd was oblivious, after all, he was idiotically unaware that Ochako had been in love with him all throughout school. And, what better way to make things official by doing it on television? Granted, it's not exactly the best way, personally he wishes he could've done this off-camera. But, the opportunity was there.

"Hey, do you have an idea on what you wanna wear?"

Izuku thinks for a beat before answering, "Kind of? Um, but, you think you can still help me out?"

"Useless Deku."

"HEY! If it was just *me*, I wouldn't be so worried! But together, we have to look good. TO-GE-THER. Get it? I can't look sloppy next to you."

"Aw, is that a compliment?" Katsuki smirks.

Izuku blushes, "N-n-no!!! I'm just saying, I have to work hard! I'm the number one Hero, I can't be upstaged by *you*."

"Damn right nerd," Katsuki smiles viciously as their competitive nature comes to the forefront, "I'll be stealing number one before you know it."

"Not on my watch Kacchan!"

The next day, Katsuki makes his way over to Izuku's place to help him pick out his outfit. He eyed Izuku up and down; who squirmed under Katsuki's gaze of scrutiny.

"Not bad," He says uncrossing his arms, "I like it, it's a good base. Shorts were a good call nerd. Wanna tell me your reasoning?"

"Ah, um," Izuku blushes, "my legs are my best asset, it's ah. It's what the people love. So um, why not show it off?"

Katsuki blinks, and then huffs a laugh, "That's your angle? To upstage me? Appeal to your audience?"

"Well, no? I mean...yes?"

"Not bad Deku. You're finally getting the hang of this."

"Was that a compliment?!"

"No, asshole. You still need some work. Get over here," Katsuki walks towards Izuku's closet to pick out some other pieces to work with. Izuku huffed as he walked over, Katsuki analyzing his outfit once more.

Izuku was wearing skin tight faded black pants with rips in them that cut off mid-thigh; there were buckles that wrapped around his left thigh, emphasizing his musculature. After rifling through some of the hangers, Katsuki pulled out a top Izuku hadn't worn yet, "take it off."

Izuku's jaw dropped, "Wh-what?"

"Your shirt, take it off? You should wear this one. I think this will go with the 'message' we're tryin' to convey."

Izuku slips his t-shirt off, and Katsuki can't help but watch Izuku's muscles contract; yep, this was a good shirt. It was long, all the way down to Izuku's knees, with slits up the side that stopped at the waist, exposing a fraction of skin. It was long-sleeved with holes at the cuffs for his thumbs. The material was thin, almost sheer, emphasizing the definition of Izuku's body subtly like a moire effect.

"This is like wearing nothing!"

"It's perfect!"

Izuku looks at him with a raised eyebrow. Katsuki knows, he knows that expression, it's when Izuku's just about tired of someone's bullshit. A deadpan expression that says, "really?"

Katsuki shoves it into his chest rolling his eyes, "C'mon Deku. Your fans don't just love your *legs*."

Izuku moves to the mirror, turning around, and checking different angles, and he hums in contentment.

"Am I right? Or, am I right?" Katsuki smirks haughtily.

It's Izuku's turn to roll his eyes, "As usual, you are spot on Kacchan. Can I change now?"

"Yeah, go ahead nerd. We're ready for tomorrow. Wanna go out for dinner? Or just order take-out?"

"Okay, okay. Umm, I'll give up anchovies if you'll settle for jalapenos."

"You gotta deal. Combination pizza?"

"Yes! And a super cheesy one!"

Katsuki leaves Izuku to change out of the outfit for their TV appearance and orders two pizzas for delivery. He gets comfortable on the couch and watches as Izuku re-enter the living room and plops on the couch next to him.

"Not bad, nerd. Listen and listen closely," Katsuki turns to Izuku and leans in, "I'm only going to say this once."

Izuku, surprised by the seriousness of Katsuki's tone, nods vigorously with rapt attention.

// He smiled, he helped Izuku do that. And while Izuku would argue that Katsuki's always a positive influence, it's usually in a competitive nature. This was different. It made Katsuki feel warm inside.

"Ah, hmmm," Izuku ponders as he slips his shirt off and hangs it up again, "I don't really feel like dressing up and heading out, can we just do take-out and a movie today?"

"Lazy ass. Sure, what do you want? Pizza?"

"Oh goddd, yes. Food of the Gods!"

"Glutton, okay. I'm gonna go order it in the living room. What do you want?"

"Anchovies!"

"Ew, no wonder you're single."

"Hey! At least I'm not trying to burn a hole through my stomach with the amount of ghost peppers you put on your pizza!"

"*Never* compare your anchovies to my ghost peppers."

"I'm impressed. You've really implemented your nerdism of note taking and followed through on them. Good job."

Izuku's jaw drops and he gawks at Katsuki who turns back, and flips through the channels finding something decent for them to watch.

"A c-c-compliment? From Kacchan?" Izuku flops back on the couch, "Am I dead? Is this heaven?"

"Oi!"

Izuku laughs, "Seriously Kacchan, thank you," he replies fondly, placing his hand on Katsuki's arm.

"It's nothin'," Katsuki blushes at the contact.

The apartment buzzer rings and Izuku is up and at the door. As Izuku walks away he assesses Izuku's outfit: fitted black sweats with a slight drop crotch and a gray t-shirt that hugged his frame perfectly,

not too loose, not too tight. The shirt rode up a little on his hips and waist, exposing the right amount of skin to be sexy.

This. This, was perfect for Izuku's everyday. It spoke to his comfort without sacrificing looking like a sloppy loser; a far cry from the meme-shirts and shorts that hung loose. He smiled, he helped Izuku do that. And while Izuku would argue that Katsuki's always a positive influence, it's usually in a competitive nature. This was different. It made Katsuki feel warm inside.

Izuku came back beaming with boxes of pizza, setting it on the coffee table, and leaves to grab drinks. They settle into the couch close to one another as they watch a cheesy action film and laughing along as they make comments.

It's during one particular scene that makes Izuku snort with laughter. It's endearing as Katsuki watches him wipe the tears from his eyes from laughing so hard and rests his head on Katsuki's, their hands naturally finding one another's. Katsuki can't help but smile, this is real. Izuku had to feel the same way.



Katsuki was getting ready for the evening show with Present Mic in his dressing room. He's checking his outfit in the mirror. Tapered black pants that were specifically tight from the knee down; it was loose around the thighs, the crotch dropped lower giving it a more relaxed feel.

He wore a black hoodie underneath a black windbreaker, that had zippers and pockets designed into the front. No accessories, other than his signature black and orange combat boots.

Knock. Knock.

"Come in."

In strolled in Izuku wearing the outfit they had put together last night. He looked nervous by the way he bit down on his lip.

"What's going on Deku?"

"Aren't you nervous?! I'm freaking out Kacchan! What if they see through our ruse, our ploy! The pitchforks and torches will be out in no time!"

Katsuki turns from the mirror, placing his hands on Izuku's shoulders, "Would you relax, there will be no pitchforks and torches. No stonings or tomatoes either, so knock it off Deku. We'll be fine."

Izuku takes a deep breath and exhales before Katsuki leads him to the couch and pushes him to sit. Katsuki goes back to the mirror to adjust the collar and hood, sneaking glances at a muttering Izuku. Katsuki's not nervous, why would he be? Not like he was confessing to the love of his life on national television or anything; not like he wasn't sure he'd be rejected outright. But Izuku wouldn't, he'd keep up appearances to save both of them and politely tell Katsuki no thanks, off camera.

Well, he already said he'd do it. And Katsuki wasn't one to go back on a plan.

An attendant comes knocking at the door, eyes wide when they see Izuku occupying the same room as Katsuki. Izuku blushes, and Katsuki knows what he's thinking. Being seen like this just adds fuel to the fire. Izuku makes his way to the door as they're called out to the stage. Katsuki grabs Izuku's hand, "Hey, we'll be fine."

Izuku smiles, some tension leaving his shoulder, "Okay, Kacchan. I believe you."

His smile is like an arrow through Katsuki's heart, knowing that Izuku has always trusted and believed in him despite everything they've been through, makes Katsuki feel like the luckiest man in the world.

Katsuki leads them out of the room, hands adjoined. The surrounding staff stares, but he tries to pay no mind. He squeezes Izuku's hand in affirmation, signaling Izuku to focus on him; when Izuku squeezes back, Katsuki smiles to himself.

As they approach the stage curtain, Present Mic's voice echoes around them. Katsuki turns back to Izuku once more, reassuring his partner before letting go of his hand. The stage hand with the microphone directs them where to stand; the extra starts to countdown their introduction with hand

signals, and Present Mic can be heard, “And our next guests dominate both our hero charts and recently the topic of hot gossip. Please welcome our top two Pro Heroes Deku and Ground Zero!”

The curtains open, stage lights blind them and a round of applause amidst whoops and hollers welcome them as they step into the spotlight. Katsuki waves to the audience with his signature smirk as he enters, Izuku steps next to him, showing off a smile of his own and waving.

Katsuki turns first to greet Present Mic and heads for the couch adjacent to Mic’s desk, with Izuku following suit. They sit close, but Izuku keeps a short distance, clearly to dispel rumors off the bat. But, to Katsuki, the gap already feels too large.

“Good evening you two!” shouts Present Mic, “Welcome to the show! And thanks for coming!”

“Hi sen—Present Mic, we’re glad to be here,” Izuku’s voice seems a little pitchy and Katsuki glances at him.

Once they make eye contact, Izuku realizes it and rubs the back of his neck sheepishly, ducking his head slightly and mouthing the word ‘Sorry.’ Katsuki gives him a barely noticeable nod, before he leans back on the couch, ankle crossing over his knee and his arm on the armrest.

“Thanks for having us Present Mic,” he says confidently.

“You two have been quite a busy pair! Making waves on the charts and in the fashion world! Ground Zero this is something you’ve always been attuned to, care to explain your interest in fashion?”

“Well, I’m not sure how many of you in the audience knew this,” he gestures to them as he talks to Present Mic, “but my Old Hag’s actually a fashion designer. It was easy to pick up and be influenced by it growing up. Fashion is a form of expression, a glimpse of your personality, or simply trying to make a statement.”

“And what would the statement you’re trying to make here?”

“It’s a vision of what dystopia would look like in

modern day society.”

“Sounds cryptic! And what about you Deku? As of late you’ve been labeled as a fashion disaster by the public. But now, you’re an influencer, a fashion icon. What was your attitude on fashion then and what brought about that change?”

“Ah, ah. Um, well,” he starts to stammer. Katsuki shoots him a small glare, and Izuku shakes his head and forges on, “I didn’t have an opportunity to understand trends and such. Being raised by a single Mom, it’s not something that was...accessible to me. And, ah, yeah, that’s embarrassing: being labeled a fashion disaster. Truth is, I really wanted to look good for my appearances, so I had my peers from UA pick out my outfits. But as we all know,” Izuku looks to the audience who all laugh, “I was a complete and lost cause.”

“But ah, thanks to Ka—Ground Zero’s help, we—I, I’ve been able to get a feel for what I like, and what my ‘style’ would be. There’s a learning curve but, I have the best teacher.”

Izuku nudges Katsuki with his elbow with a small smile. The entire audience coos and several “Aw’s” could be heard.

“Aw indeed,” Present Mic asserts, “Following up on that, Ground Zero, would it be correct to say that both of your outfits reflect this message?”

Katsuki nods, “It is; but it’s also more reflective of what suits Deku and I. I think it speaks to our personalities. Personally, and I think Deku would agree, is that our comfort comes first, but that doesn’t mean we have to look sloppy.”

Mic’s face lights up as if Katsuki just gave him the perfect ammunition to lead with, “We all know that you two grew up together, aspired for the same things, and are famously known as The Wonder Duo. But, you two seem even closer as of late, and you seem to have a hand in Deku’s wardrobe change, how did you get so involved?”

“Hah, that’s easy. I just got fed up with how sh—crappy he looked. I saw the reports, I saw how our ‘friends’,” as he used his fingers to air quote the term, “dressed him, and I..”

“He lost it!” Izuku interjects, “Ground Zero was completely fed up with it! He came over to give me a lecture on it, and then raided my closet! And that was just the beginning.”

Mic leans in closer and Katsuki gulps. He knows where this is heading now, and he knows what he *should* say, should *that* particular question appear, but he waits. He feels Izuku fidget anxiously in his seat, but doesn’t look his way. That would be too obvious.

“Yes, the beginning. Reports had started to say that you two were seen holding hands; speculation of a relationship had sprouted and then...” Mic paused for effect, “Then a rumor that Deku and MindFreak were seen on an intimate date suggesting something amiss between you two.

Hey nerd, check this out.

What do you think about that Deku?”

“Ah, hah-ha,” Izuku laughs nervously, “there’s nothing to speculate about when it comes to MindFreak. We were just two friends catching up. I hadn’t seen him in a while since he works in another city altogether, that’s all. Really!”

“Okay, but that still doesn’t answer at hand. What’s going on between you two?”

Izuku continues to nervously laugh.

“We’re dating,” Katsuki says, matter of factly, because yes, this is what the PR team had discussed with them, “And just because Deku was seen with some extra doesn’t make him some kind of two-timer the gossip sites were insinuating.”

Katsuki swallows hard as he decides to go off script, “Anyone would be lucky to date Deku. He’s hardworking, he’s empathetic, and kind. He’s the type of person whose happiness is infectious; you just can’t help but smile when you’re around him. We’re not officially a couple, we’re dating.”

He pauses for effect, turning to Izuku, “But I’d like to change that.”

It’s almost comical how Izuku’s eyes bug out, and he looks like a fish out of water, gasping for air; the audience gasping in surprise. Mic too looks taken aback, but that quickly turns into a million-watt smile.

“The last few months have shown me that being by Izuku’s side is as normal as freakin’ breathing, but there were moments, where it just felt like there should be more. Holding hands, movie nights? All of that just felt right, it felt good. It felt like home. So I’m asking you Deku, why settle for an extra like MindFreak when you’ve got the best of the best right next to you?”

Izuku blinks a few times before snorting and then busting out laughing. “Oh, oh, my God,” Izuku sputters, “Wow, I, this. This is your confession!?”

“Oi—”

“I mean, I’m not surprised,” Izuku says wiping the tears caused by laughing so hard from his eyes, “This is very— sorry I’m gonna break protocol for a second. But, this is so very *Kacchan* of you,” Izuku’s voice is fond in his last statement.

Katsuki hadn’t expected it nor did he see it coming, but Izuku grabbed his hand and squeezed it, “And I wouldn’t have it any other way. To be honest, I—I was hoping the feelings were reciprocated. I mean, you’re right. It just felt right. So yes, Kacchan. I won’t settle for anything but the best.”

The audience collectively “aw’s” and Mic does a slow clap for the duo who smile fondly at one another, interlacing their hands.

“Well folks, you saw it here first. Deku and Ground Zero confirmed! Congratulations you two! Fashion doesn’t just make any statement, but a statement of love!”

Katsuki rolls his eyes but Izuku laughs, “Who woulda thought that me admitting I was useless at something would bring us together.”



Several weeks later

“Hey nerd, check this out.”

Izuku walks out of the kitchen plopping onto the couch next to Katsuki, leaning over into his space, “Ohh, is this what I think it is Kacchan?”

“Ha, yeah, you’re favorite entertainment magazine. You ready to see it?”

“God, I’m kinda nervous, but yeah! Let’s see!”
Katsuki opens the magazine, flipping through till they get to the centerfold.

“Ha! I knew it!”

Izuku grabs the magazine and just about jumps up and down from the couch, “Yes! Kacchan we did it!” flinging his arms around his neck and hugging him.

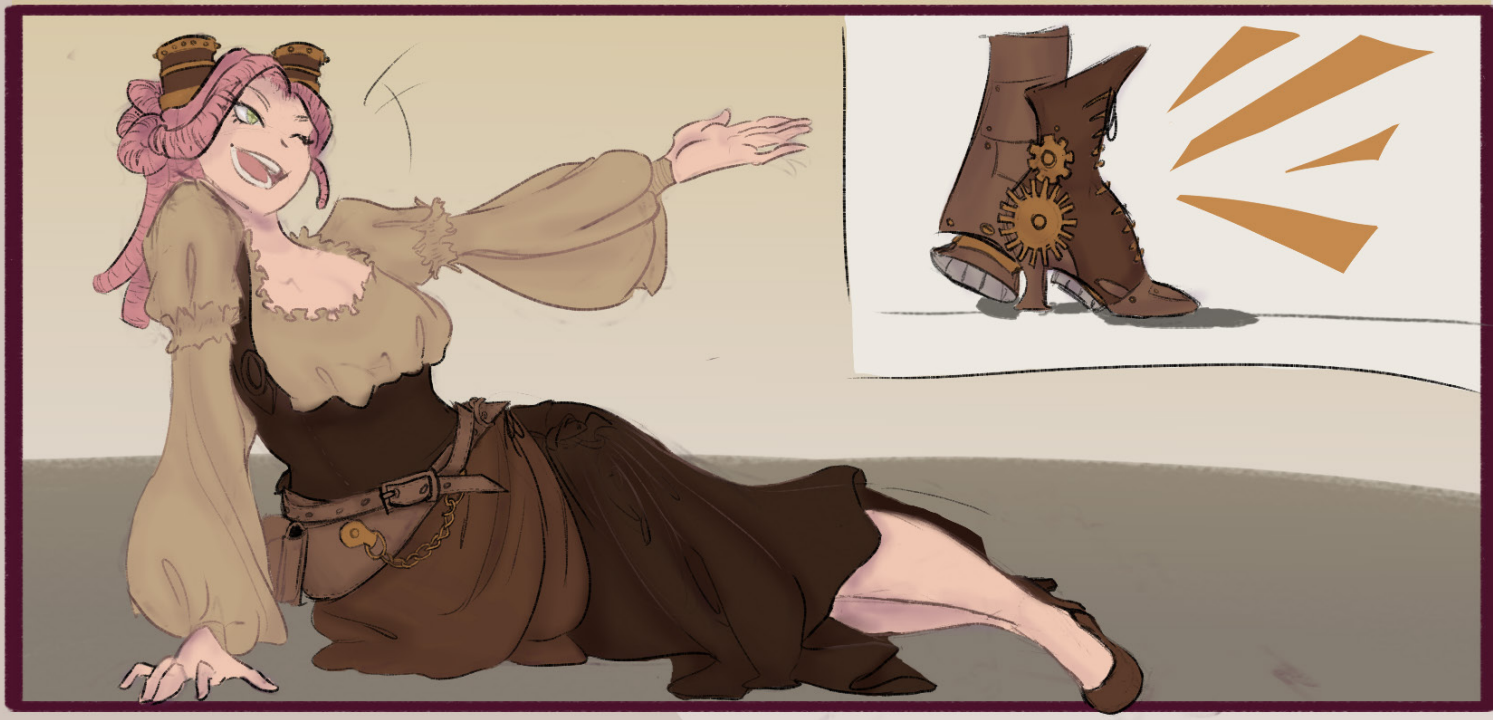
Katsuki hugs him back laughing. “I don’t know what you expected Deku, this is *US* we’re talking about.”

The magazine falls to the ground, the centerfold article called, “For the Love of Fashion” with the subtitle, “best-dressed couples that have absolutely won us over.”

Right under the headline, is a candid photo of Izuku and Katsuki walking hand in hand, laughing in matching black outfits on another date, with a large number one written across *Pro Heroes Deku and Ground Zero’s dystopian style steals our hearts and keeps us on our toes. We can’t wait to see what the future holds for our favorite couple.*



GO!
PLUS
ULTRA!



COPE
LIVE CONCERT
feat. Earphone Jack
ABARA
pm



BREATHE LIFE

“No.”

“Absolutely not.”

“Get this shit out of my sight.”

Boring. Everything is fucking boring. Katsuki thought bitterly as he leaned back in his office’s large white chair.

His glasses were propped directly on the end of nose that was turned up looking at the clashing complementary colors he was given. He tossed away each magazine page he was given with great distaste and everyone else sitting at the long table held their breaths, afraid.

“Mr. Bakugou, sir, I mean this with full respect and nothing but respect but...” the meek voice of an intern spoke up. Katsuki pause mid action in throwing one of the tacky pages on the ground and cut his sharp red eyes towards her.

“But *what?*” He said curtly, looking at the extra brain haired intern expectantly. He had no real idea what her name was, and he truthfully wasn’t about to learn now.

“B-But, um, the printing companies asked that you make a decision today if we want to run the magazine on time,” she stammered, looking at him with pleading cinnamon brown eyes. The poor

Kyuuka Koinu

young girl was tightly clasping her hands together along with everyone else, waiting for the head of the director of the magazine to say something. But instead of answering her, Katsuki sat up in his chair straight, eyes locked with her. He slowly took off his reading glasses and folded his hands calmly.

“Whose name attached to Plus Ultra magazines?” His deep voice asked sharply. He didn’t take his eyes off of her as he waited with a frightening amount of patience.

“Yours, Mr. Bakugou,” the intern meekly replied.

“Good job, now—whose reputation is going to be attached with this if we publish subpar pages? *Hah?*”

“...Yours.”

“*Exactly.*” Katsuki gave a scowl before clearing his throat and fire burned through his eyes. Everyone

held their breath for the inevitable and it came in like a landslide. “Now, I have been on the *top* of this industry since I started. Not a single damn soul can cut it close to the Plus Ultra fashion industries. But I have watched art and fashion decline over the last five years and I absolutely fuckin’ *refuse* to let myself go down with all my other competitors and feed into this superficial *bullshit*.”

Katsuki slammed his fist on the table out of frustration and everyone in the room flinched. His red eyes skated over everyone’s stiffened postures and it made the stressed out designer sigh heavily. He had let his temper spill through yet again and truthfully it was no one else’s fault.

The blond director has been frustrated these last few years. It felt like the color in everything had drained out from his life. Social media was steering asthematic, creativity, and drive to the point everyone was starting to mimic the same four fucking styles. If it wasn’t god damn pastels it was this fake leafy hippy shit. If it wasn’t that, it was people making a painting purely to look good and not to feel.

Where had all the emotion in art gone? How was he supposed to find a featured artist within the next week that actually made him feeling something? Katsuki felt a skull splitting migraine coming in—and coming in quickly.

“Everyone get out,” he hissed. All the people in the room exchanged confused expressions and it made Katsuki loud, absolutely fed up groan when no one moved. “I said *leave!*”

Without being need to told a third time, everyone scrambled out. All the men and women grabbed their papers, binders, and picked up the sheets Katsuki had discarded on the floor. The interns and employees all shuffled out of the large boardroom with a fervor, eager to get out of their boss’s unmistakable incoming line of rage.

Katsuki tiredly pushed his face in the palms of his hands, rubbing his eyes tiredly. He secretly hoped that maybe he could wipe his eye-sight clean of all the ugly eyesores he was bombarded with today. When the blond haired man lifted his head he began to think about the long list of things I had to do. It was already early in the morning and right

now he had to figure out a way to revamp this month’s entire fucking issue within the next week.

He put on his glasses, allowing his world to focus back in to a crisp, clear image. When his eyes fully adjusted he was surprised to see his personal assistant, Ashido Mina, leaned against the door frame, staring at him rather unimpressed.

“I thought I said you could go back to work Mina,” he replied while standing up. “I need some time to think about what I’m going to do.” His mind was distracted as he stared at a forgotten sheet of paper in front of him.

“I just wanted to remind you of your ten am meeting with a possible featured artist, Midoriya Izuku,” Mina replied coolly, unphased by his temper. “He’s in his last year at university and has been trying to get a meeting with you for a while—”

“—Cancel it. I don’t have the time anymore,” Katsuki grumbled, collecting his things.

This time Mina’s golden eyes went wide with worry. “But, Katsuki, he’s been waiting to meet you for a very long time—”

Oh hell no.

“—Look, Mina. Let’s be honest with ourselves here,” Katsuki sighed, looking at her with a leveled expression. “I’ve met with over a dozen artists to feature and so far I have a shit pile of people and some eyesore of a possible magazine issue we might actually have to publish and watch flop completely. I would rather save myself the time versus just having another pointless interview.”

“B-But, Katsuki. I say this as your life long friend, not your employee: you should at least look at this guys work.”

“I’m sorry but tell him to reschedule for sometime in six months.” The blond shook his head, completely unconvinced. “I’m going to head back to my condo to try to clean this mess up. I’ll see you tomorrow, Mina. Go home and get some rest. Tell shitty hair I said hi.”

He stood up and packed up his belongings, passing by his pink haired friends. While Katsuki's thoughts were too busy being clouded with how he could fix the magazine, he missed the saddened look in golden eyes as he passed by.



Katsuki put his earbuds inside his ears in a hurry as he smoothed out the wrinkles in his peacoat. He ignored all the frightening stares he got from the surrounding employees as he calmly left out of his office, the aura of fear rolling off everyone. He figured if he was going to turn this shit show around within the short time he had, he might as well do it from the comfort of his home office. He ran a tired hand through his perfectly placed blond spikes as he stepped off the elevator into the lobby.

Katsuki, out of instinct, kept his eyes downcast on the porcelain floors of the lobby, completely ignoring the blur of red sneakers that he passed. The squeaking of the sneakers turned quickly and followed him.

"M-Mr. Bakugou!" A melodic tenor voice called out. Katsuki looked up finally at the sound of his name only to meet with a blurry amount of green. He blinked once, confused at just how fucking green this guy was. Wild dark colored forest green hair contrasted with the shimmering, bright jade colored eyes that looked directly at him. Katsuki immediately frowned and kept walking when the young adult's face read pure excitement.

"W-Wait," the green haired man called out again, following Katsuki quickly. "Mr. Bakugou excuse me—"

"—I don't have time for press today. Please, leave me alone," Katsuki snapped back.

"Oh, I'm not press. I just want—"

"—I don't have time for an autograph either," Katsuki grumbled. He put on his sunglasses, ready to leave but was instantly fucking peeved when the smaller man placed his body between him and the door. "Are you fucking serious, kid? Move—"

"—I'm Midoriya Izuku, your ten am!"

Oh hell no.

Katsuki immediately maneuvered his feet to sidestep the persistent man and walked straight out the door.

"H-Hey! Where are you going?" The man named Izuku called after him, following him quickly.

Katsuki kept his head down trying his best to press down all the irritation he was having from being followed but the other was as diligent as a goddamn worker bee.

"A-Are we having the meeting elsewhere?" Katsuki ignored him, hoping he would get the damn hint, but it was fruitless.

He kept going rambling and even reached around to show Katsuki a leather portfolio he didn't see before.

"I suppose that makes sense that you would like to talk to people outside of the professional setting. I brought my portfolio and I've always been such a big fan of yours! If we're going to do an interview somewhere I know you do like coffee so if I may suggest this place downtown you might like—"

Without warning, the freckled man stumbled on his feet and dropped the cluster of papers everyone, stopping everyone in the vicinity. Katsuki halted his walking in a jarring movement with a scowl as various men and women awkwardly tripped over their own feet as well. A cluster of whispers gathered around them as everyone tried to be careful not to step on the mass of papers that was quickly being blown about.

That's when Katsuki saw a university ID on sprawled on the ground and sighed.

"Shit, uh, sorry, I'm a bit clumsy," the young man chuckled nervously, bending down to Katsuki's feet to collect his belongings. "Give me a moment—"

"—We're not doing the interview, Midoriya," Katsuki cut in, deciding to put an end to the embarrassing floundering. "You can call Ms. Ashido and

reschedule for another appointment but I have more pressing things to do today with my time.”

Wide, green eyes looked up at him, shocked. Gradually, disbelief started to trickle into the round face and the student scrunched his nose.

“But I had this slot for the last three *months*,” Izuku said slowly. His eyes searched all of Katsuki’s face for some form of a joke. “You agreed to meet with me.”

Katsuki pressed his tongue to the inside of his cheek and looked away from the bright green eyes with just a twinge of guilt. “Shit happens, kid. Things don’t always go your way just because you want them too. Now, get out of my way.”

The blond stepped over the pile of mess in front of him, ignoring the undeniable hurt that was crackling into the other. He kept his shoulders stiff but tough shit—life was hard and you thick skin was needed for the real world.

But just as he started to walk away, the once meet voice called out to him with a much firmer, judgemental tone.

“You never would have done this when you first started out.”

The words gripped Katsuki’s attention like a fist wrapping around his mind, jarring him. He whirled around.

“And what the hell is *that* supposed to mean?” Katsuki hissed. “You have no idea who I am as a person.”

Red eyes cut sharp, but so did green ones that were clearly laced with betrayal and disappointment.

“No, I guess I *don’t*,” Izuku hissed back, gathering his things quicker. “I just thought you would be better than everyone else nowadays. You know, people who are too busy to stop and look around. Always in such a rush—but you’re just a shallow and rude as the rest of the world.”

Katsuki starred on with shock, angry and fully ready to give the goddamn university nerd a piece

of him mind—but his words were clogged in his throat at the sight of new tears clinging to the edges of forest green eyes. The blond man didn’t expect to get such an emotional reaction, everyone else in his life being void of passion that was now so close in front of him.

But those eyes—those eyes *burned*.

There were thousands of unexpected emotions swirling around, entangled in each other like different colors of paint floating around in a river of water. It made the elder artist uncharacteristically stammer because there was a spark that had ignited deep within the young man that Katsuki hadn’t seen in ages.

And just as he was admiring it, the freckled young man stood up and stormed past him. The student’s shaky fingers were clutching his artwork angrily, hurt etched into his face. The young artist didn’t bother to try to avoid bumping his shoulder and it made Katsuki stumble, clutching his briefcase.

The flowery scent of the young man’s cologne brushed past him and stuck in Katsuki’s mind in an instant. He whirled around trying to stop him from leaving—completely unsure of what he was going to say—but the man named Midoriya Izuku was gone out the door quicker than anything he’s ever witnessed.

The whirlwind of a man exited his life just as fast as he came. However, Izuku’s words and fiercely deep green eyes stuck with Katsuki more than the uninspired older man expected. Katsuki’s red eyes watched him leave down and around the corner, out the glass building but something fell down from the bundle of papers he was holding. The blond stepped outside slowly, looking down at the sheet of paper that had blown away from the green haired man. When Katsuki crouched down to pick it up, he was surprised to see one of the more beautiful pieces of art he had ever seen on it with the title of ‘Breath of Life’ in bold white lettering at the top.

Red eyes thoughtfully looked over the instagram handle and website printed at the very bottom.



“He’s not answering my calls, Katsuki!” Mina hissed into the phone. “What did you *do!*?”

“I ran into him on the way out. I’m looking at his stuff now,” Katsuki sighed, trying his best not to think about the extremely grotesque mistake he had just made. “He’s having a show in two days. I think I’ll go talk to himself, probably better if I do it in person.”

“Finally, a good move on your half. I told you the guy was good.”

“Whatever. Goodnight, Mina.”

Truthfully, when Katsuki thought he made a grotesque mistake, it was more than just grotesque. This guy’s fucking art was *astounding*.

The green haired man used a mixed media for all his pieces and all of his designs were breathtakingly unique. They were passionate and full of life Katsuki was sure was drained from the world. The vibrant young man’s paintings were just as bright as his smile as he did surrealism and matched each piece with a small poem that

Katsuki took his sunglasses back off as he stood in front of a large painting.

mirrored the imagery in the artwork. Midoriya Izuku’s instagram feed was interesting—it was real, down to earth, and centered around his art. There were a couple of photographs of his friends online but even those photographs were still captured from an interesting composition and angle.

He has a good eye.

Katsuki thought lazily to himself as he looked at a candid photograph as a small with hair half dyed red and white. However, what piqued Katsuki’s interest the most was the lack of self that was on the nerd’s instagram. There was only one photo of

him and it was of him smiling at what seemed to be an art gallery, completely caught off guard.

By surprise, Katsuki’s heart did a strange flip in its cavity when he realized the man was beyond handsome. How had he not noticed that earlier? He was breathtaking.

But despite the striking looks, there was something about his smile that made Katsuki curiously tilt his head. It was pure, and full of what seemed like joy, but there was something else lying underneath. If Izuku’s art was the water and air flowing through the world, then there was something solid and sturdy like earth hidden behind his soft smile.

It made Katsuki curious. Curious enough to look to see what time the art show was.

The blond man scrolled down further on the page and felt his heart stop when there was a rather old dated picture of Izuku next to a distinctive piece of art. *His art.*

Fuck.

The blond never clicked on a picture faster before. Sitting there as plain as day was a picture of that freckled nerd five years at the big art show that made Katsuki’s art career launch. The young guy in the photo had full cheeks, clearly much younger, and standing next to his portrait painting looking like a giddy fanboy that just met his idol. Ruby colored eyes shifted downwards to finally look at the captain and Katsuki felt his heart squeeze.

Midori_Arts: Finally got a picture with my favorite painting! Kacchan’s work is so cool!

Katsuki ran his hand down his face and groaned. He fucked up. He fucked up hard.



When it came time for the art show it was in the most sketchy part of Tokyo that Katsuki could have imagined.

He hadn’t been anywhere like this since he first started up, and it sparked something new inside of him that he wasn’t anticipating. The crowd was a

mix of young and old, grungy and sheek, a mix of all ethnicities and was illuminated by several neon signs.

Immediately at the entrance Katsuki got through, listening to several conversations from others standing in line.

"I'm so excited to see his work!" One girl giggled, wearing a pink fluffy dress. "He's been working so hard on everything this year and we're just so proud of him."

"I know! He's so determined it's amazing." Katsuki could only assume they were talking about the green eyed tornado that has crash landed in his life.

Determined was the perfect word to describe him the more Katsuki thought about it. The passion that filled his eyes stirred up something at the bottom of Katsuki's heart that felt like dust. Whatever the old feeling was had settled to the deep corners of his being, but that terrible, burning looking Izuku gave him right as he stormed past him, kicked it right back up again.

And it felt damn good.

Katsuki didn't smile as he showed the bouncer his ID to get into the event, and the ash blond promptly put on his sunglasses to blend in with the crowd. As he worked his way inside, he was more than surprised to see the most beautiful fucking art he had laid eyes on in nearly a decade.

Katsuki took his sunglasses back off as he stood in front of a large painting.

It was everything that could embody as *Izuku* based off the light research Katsuki had done. It was vibrant, poetic, and entirely captured exactly what the title of the show was: *Breath of Life*.

A number of new ideas, concepts, and fashion designs slowly started to bubble inside of Katsuki's mind the longer he stared at the breathtaking masterpiece in front of him.

"Mr. Bakugou?" A familiar voice called out from behind him.

Slowly, Katsuki turned around, folding his sunglasses away into his pocket only to be met with a much more stunning image of Izuku than the business proper one he was shown two days away.

The freckled young man was wearing clean, ripped black jeans, and a floral green shirt that was neatly tied in the front. The knot looked like it was carefully handled, like Izuku wanted everything to be perfect for the night and his messy green curls were carefully sorted with product with a part on the left of his head.

"Hey there," he said carefully. He looked around at the packed house and all the different pieces on the wall that were all stunning. "Are these all yours?"

Izuku nodded, holding his orange colored drink in his nervous hand. "They are. It's a solo show. I-I don't mean to be rude, but what are you doing here? How did you find out about this?"

Katsuki shrugged and looked at the impressively realistic self portrait off to the other side of the room. "You dropped a flyer after you shoulder butted me," he explained. "The art on it was stunning so I took the liberty to look at all your stuff on instagram."

Izuku's eyes went wide and Katsuki smirked. "You're damn good, nerd," Katsuki complimented. "I'm sorry for not doing the interview."

A subtle sugar colored blush slowly coated its way over dusted freckles and Katsuki felt his heart do that damn thing again looking at the handsome face. Izuku cleared his throat and looked down at his red sneakers, clearly flustered.

"It's okay," the meek voice tried to wave off but Katsuki wasn't convinced. "I understand you're busy and you probably had things to do for the upcoming publication."

"Naw, it wasn't okay," Katsuki corrected, following the pull in his heart and stepping closer. "I should've met with you even if it was only for a couple of minutes. There was time—there's always time. Especially for someone like you—look at this."

Katsuki gestured around the full room for emphasis. "You're amazing."

"Ah, thank you! You're being way too kind."

The elder man admired the shy smile he was given and only adored how much deeper the others blush got.

"Not being kind enough honestly," Katsuki commented, flashing a wide smirk. "How about I make up the interview with you. Coffee tomorrow?"

Izuku's eyes widened, taken aback. He stumbled over his words for a while before blurting out, "S-Sure! That's works!"

Katsuki couldn't hold back his smile.

"Perfect. Now, what's your number, Izuku? I have to admit I think you can change a lot of things at Plus Ultra Industries."



Eight months later

"Kacchan where should I put these new fabrics?" Izuku called out from inside their shared art studio in downtown Tokyo. The sitting blond looked up to his now boyfriend dressed messily in overalls and covered in paint and smiled.

"Put them anywhere, Deku," he answered. "Just don't pile them up on important shit like that last. I couldn't find a damn thing in the sewing room." "Gotcha!" Izuku smiled and leaned down to place a light kiss on the elder man's cheek before walked away, arms overflowing with colorful fabrics. Red eyes watched lovingly as his new reason to work and keep moving made his way across the room. Katsuki carefully opened his phone as he sipped his coffee, clicking on the last headline trending with a smile.

Fashion News: Tokyo, Japan

The latest additions to the Plus Ultra fashion line within the last six months have been unparalleled! Newest young hire, Midoriya Izuku, has been turning things around in such a delightful, unexpected way.

He has even been called 'Muse' by the longer term CEO of Plus Ultra, Bakugou Katsuki himself.

Not too many know about their dynamic or relationship but the two have been thriving off each other's energies in public, sketching together at coffee shops and openingly debating in the conference room about new fashion looks according to sources.

It seems like they're good for each other in more than one way. In the latest interview from Bakugou, he was asked why did he hire Midoriya and put him as creative director once the young artist graduated university. Bakugou just simply smiled and looked fondly at the green eyed fashionista next to him and said:

"He breathed life into me when I had thought it to be lost. That is something that is irreplaceable and precious."

**GO!
PLUS
ULTRA!**

Cover Concept Fashion Hero No. 12





*Mellow
Daydreams*



CONFIDENCE

MIRA

The first time Shouto lays eyes on Izuku Midoriya, his initial thought is: *what an idiot*. This guy spends every day walking through life as though there's a rainbow in the hallway, and all he has to do is complete the trials of this room to reach it. He's never met anyone who smiles so much or looks so determined, even in the face of impossible defeat. And yet, for some reason, Shouto can't help but watch him.

He does so from his seat in the back of the classroom—the very back. It's not that Shouto is shy, or that he doesn't like people. It's just that... he doesn't like people *looking* at him. He hates the first glance. The way the eyes always widen slightly with surprise before the brow furrows with concern, but it's the final look that that upsets him: the pity.

Shouto *hates* that look.

The moment people realize his scar is exactly that—a *scar*, a sign that he's been through something awful which permanently altered his skin, they come to the inevitable assumption that he is weak...which is why he hates it. Shouto isn't weak; he's strong. But they don't know that, nor does Shouto really care to show them. He doesn't really care what they think in the end. If he's being honest, there isn't much he cares about at all.

He doesn't try hard at school, because everything

comes pretty easily. Making friends isn't much work because he doesn't want them. And as for his appearance? He spends next-to-no time on it, because he knows that's exactly what his father would want him to do, and Shouto couldn't care *less* about that.

Instead, he throws on his black t-shirts and dark, torn jeans every day, slips on his spiked belt buckle because he likes to imagine using the spikes when his father pisses him off, and some simple combat boots. His tattoos and piercings in combination with his harsh stare also help to keep others away. His hair, on the other hand, is a little bit attention grabbing. The color is half red and half white—naturally—though most people assume he's dyed it, as it would really match quite well with the rest of his look. His mop has grown a little longer than it sat in middle school, when his father could still make him cut it, but he doesn't mind. The strands, a little wiry, hang lower to further cover his scar, to hide the reminder of what his father forced his mother to do.

On second thought, perhaps Shouto *does* care about one thing: his mother. She's sweet and kind and doesn't give a shit how Shouto dresses or what friends he makes. She just cares about him. She's a little odd and lives in a facility, but Shouto loves her all the same. He appreciates how gentle her touch is, the warmth in her bright blue eyes each time he visits. He doesn't get many warm looks these days.

Except from Izuku Midoriya, who looks at everyone as though they've hung the sun. He must have dazed out for the remainder of the class, because the green-eyed freak looks at Shouto right now with a rare look of determination—rare for Shouto, not for Midoriya. Apparently Midoriya looks at everything this way if it isn't doing exactly what he wants. Whispers around the classroom say the odd boy doesn't take no for an answer. He seems to be well-liked, though, which Shouto doesn't entirely understand.

"Yes?" He says, brow arched.

"Spar with me today," Midoriya responds seriously. His trademark smile is missing, and Shouto cocks his head. His hair falls into his eyes, but he lets it brush his lashes without wiping it away. It's probably doing well to hide his scar.

"Why?"

Izuku sets his feet, as though the question is a challenge, but Shouto issued no such thing. He waits to hear what the reasoning is, genuinely curious. Shouto has the strongest quirk in the classroom—no doubt about it. It seems pointless for anyone to go up against him. Even Izuku Midoriya.

"Because! I think we'd be a good matchup, and—" The same determination remains on his face for a moment while he thinks for a moment, before he bursts out laughing. The sound is like rain following a drought, like dewdrops on grass in the thawing spring. It's pleasant, Shouto finds. He doesn't hear much laughter, isolated as he typically keeps himself. However, he's no less confused.

"Okay," Midoriya admits, shrugging. "I just want to hang out with you." He plops himself into the

empty desk next to Shouto and sighs. "You hide away back here all the time, and I feel like you could use a friend."

Shouto stiffens, pleasant feeling instantly dissolved. "No."

"What?" Midoriya leans forward, brow furrowing. "Why not?"

Mismatched eyes shift to meet green briefly, uncertain. Why does Midoriya care what sort of friends Shouto has? It's none of his business. He frowns.

"I don't want a friend."

**// Another
one of those
things he'd done
on a whim to piss
off his father.**

Midoriya scoots even further forward. Honestly, his rear is barely even on the seat anymore, thighs practically holding him in a squat. "What?! Who doesn't want a friend?" he asks.

"Me," Shouto responds flatly. He redirects his eyes to the papers on his desk, shuffling them together and placing them into his folder so he can pack them in his bag. Midoriya places a palm on top of the black plastic before he can do so.

"Well, I want to be your friend."

Shouto looks up at him, one eye burning with flame and one cool as a frozen pond. "Well. I don't care," he retorts. Midoriya's jaw drops, lips parted as his eyes flick back and forth between Shouto's, searching for words. Shouto rolls his eyes and yanks his folder from beneath the scarred palm which holds it. Slipping it in his bag, he doesn't make another sound, standing and moving to exit

the classroom without a second glance. He *almost* makes it, but just as he reaches the door, the same voice comes from behind him.

“Wait! Todoroki!”

He pauses, in spite of himself, slinging his black bag over his shoulder and licking his lips. His tongue ring is cool against it, reminding him that it’s there. He’d forgotten, honestly. Another one of those things he’d done on a whim to piss off his father. He kind of likes it now though. It’s sort of fun to play with.

Rolling it around in his mouth, he turns around to see Midoriya rounding the desk in the front row, barreling toward him.

“I’m not taking no for an answer! We should do *something* together! I don’t really know you, and that doesn’t make any sense because we’re in the same class and we see each other *every day*! We have three years of it, so it would only make sense if we got along, right? I mean, there’s no purpose in dancing around the fact that...”

The boy continues rambling, eyes unfocused while his hands move madly, explaining away his motives. Shouto stares at him blankly. He really doesn’t care to make friends, but he doesn’t want to deal with this incessant blathering either. It’s like Midoriya doesn’t even know he is speaking aloud anymore, droning on and on. Shouto walks back into the room and sits down in the corner desk, throwing his bag back on the floor and waiting for him to finish. He sighs, finally starting to understand why Midoriya always gets what he wants.

It doesn’t seem he’ll stop until he does.

The words continue, Midoriya following him animatedly to the desk without Shouto hearing a syllable until finally, Shouto holds a palm up for him to stop. He does, eyes wide and brows raised.

“...what?” Midoriya says, lips beginning to curl upward at the edges.

“Fine,” Shouto responds, tone bored. “We can be friends.”

He figures if he agrees, it’ll get Midoriya off his back. He can just say they’re friends right? No need for him to actually do anything differently.

Midoriya *beams*. “Great!”

“Great.”

“I’ll see you at lunch tomorrow, then!” Midoriya yelps, already hurrying toward the door. “Can’t wait!” He waves over his shoulder excitedly as he rounds the corner.

Shouto rolls his eyes. Of course Midoriya will see him at lunch. They see each other at lunch *every day*, in addition to in class *every day*, which is actually *earlier* in the day than lunch. Shouto doesn’t understand what friendship has to do with any of that, but he shakes his head and starts his walk home anyway.

Izuku Midoriya is a weird creature.

It’s only once he hits his pillow that he realizes something that keeps him up the rest of the night: he doesn’t know what pity looks like in those big green eyes.



Shouto spends most of his days trying *not* to be noticed. He doesn’t like the negative attention that his appearance sometimes brings him. Thankfully, his demeanor is usually enough to warn people off, and he is blissfully able to eat his lunch alone. He gets his food and heads to the corner most table in the cafeteria, farthest from the door and from the buffet lines. Not many people venture in this direction, so he gets to enjoy his lunch in silence, quietly slurping soba which he orders on a near-daily basis.

For these reasons, a noodle literally slips from his mouth when a tray drops down across from him. Fire and ice lift to meet forest green, bright and shining with a smile that says Shouto hung the moon. He didn’t, but it seems that Midoriya might genuinely believe that. He can’t imagine any other reason for a smile to be so exaggerated.

Shouto is becoming concerned about the boy's intelligence.

"Hi!" Midoriya says brightly. "How's your lunch?"

Shouto blinks, not sure how to respond to that. His lunch is the same that it is every day. Except, well, now it's not. Because there's another person here.

"Different," he settles on.

Midoriya takes a seat, opening his drink and taking a big gulp. "Is different a good thing? Did they make the noodles in a new broth or something?" He sits forward to peer at Shouto's bowl, and Shouto almost pulls it back toward himself at the invasion of space.

"No," he responds, hands gripping the edge of his tray, just in case.

Green eyes survey them, lingering at the black markings on his knuckles—one of Shouto's first tattoos. "Oh," Midoriya says quietly. His eyes shift from Shouto's hands to his face, tone hopeful. "Well, I hope it at least still tastes good?"

Shouto nods, and Midoriya's smile is instant. "Good!" He responds, happily digging into his own food.

Having Midoriya at the table feels weird. It's a clear interruption of Shouto's routine, and he can't decide yet if he likes it, but he goes back to his soba anyway. He's a little nervous that he'll have to put effort into his time at lunch now. Will this be a permanent thing? He hopes not. He can't possibly be Midoriya's only friend. Surely that's the only reason he's here: because Shouto is a *new* friend. Maybe once Shouto isn't new anymore, he'll leave him alone.

He wonders vaguely how long it takes to become an *old* friend. Is there something he can do to speed that along? He contemplates ideas, such as jumping into the friendship with more enthusiasm. Maybe if they become friends more quickly then Midoriya won't feel like he has to try so hard...? Shouto wouldn't even know where to start with that. He frowns, sighing into his noodles as Midoriya jabbars on.



Lunch occurs this way daily for two weeks, and Shouto decides to finally just *ask* him.

"Why do you keep sitting here?"

Midoriya's moss-colored brows lift in surprise, eyes crinkling at the corners. "Because we're friends! I like having lunch together."

Shouto cocks his head. "Why?"

"What do you mean *why*? I like you!"

A sigh leaves Shouto's lips and he sets down his chopsticks, sitting back in his seat. "We have nothing in common."

"What?!" Midoriya protests, cheeks pinkening. Shouto notes that his freckles don't look quite so bright when he blushes. Interesting. "We have things in common!"

Mismatched eyes look down at Shouto's grunge button-down and shredded jeans, then up at Midoriya's neat, fitted pants and thick, warm sweater. The boy was the utmost of proper, was clearly polite and doing his best to give off the 'good guy' vibe.

Shouto doesn't care about that. He just wants to be a hero, a better one than his dad. He can do that from the shadows, like Eraserhead, stay out of the media and their judging gazes. It doesn't take popularity and notoriety to save lives.

Midoriya sputters. "Just because my clothes are kind of—um—nerdy? Doesn't mean we aren't similar!"

"Tell me, when's the last time you were in trouble with your parents Midoriya?" Shouto issued the question to prove a point, not to make the other feel bad, but for some reason, those green eyes grow downcast.

Midoriya chews his pink lower lip. "Uh..."

Shouto waits, unsure what else to do. Midoriya scratches his head.

“Well, my dad left us a long time ago. So, my mom and I kind of stick together. I try not to upset her...”

“Oh.”

Oh, great. Now Shouto knows more about Midoriya than other people in their class. Does this mean they're better friends?

Maybe some would even say *old*.

“Why do you ask?” Midoriya looks at him expectantly, curiosities hanging from the down-curved corners of his mouth.

“I was going to say that I don't get along with my father and use it to prove the point that you and I are not similar.”

Midoriya giggles, light and bright and suddenly unconcerned. “Oh, like our clothes?”

Shouto nods, and Midoriya leans inward like he's telling a secret.

toying with the corners of his lips. “So tell me why you did. We've got another...” Green eyes peek at the large clock above the buffet lines. “20 minutes, at least.”

So Shouto does. Midoriya listens intently, eyes shifting only from his food back to Shouto's gaze, never once deviating to peek at the scar. His face is serious, maybe even sad in some instances, but still... never pitying.

It's not so bad, Shouto realizes, talking to Midoriya. The guy seems like a good listener, and he doesn't seem to care either way what Shouto does with his life or what decisions he makes. It makes Shouto wonder why he wanted to hear the story at all, if he's being honest, but even so, he tells it.

When he finishes, Midoriya grins. “Well, I like your style, so at least one good thing came of all that!”

It's not the answer Shouto was expecting. He feels his face grow a little bit warm, and he's tempted to touch an icy hand to his cheeks to cool it off.

// His expression doesn't change, lips still a flat line as their eyes make contact. Izuku smiles, but Todoroki just turns back around.

“Appearances aren't everything, you know.”

This is confusing to Shouto, because yes, they are. It's why his father never lets the flames die around his head, why his mother's stay in the inpatient psychiatry facility is a secret, why he bothered changing his own style in the first place.

Appearances matter.

When Shouto doesn't respond, Midoriya frowns. “You disagree,” he observes.

Shouto shrugs. “I like my tattoos. I like my eyebrow and my tongue piercings, and I like the color black, because it doesn't clash with my hair. But I'd be lying if I said that's why I got all of these things.”

This time, it's Midoriya's turn to tilt his head, smile

He doesn't, because he thinks that would be too obvious, but he considers it.

After that, he doesn't complain about Midoriya joining him for lunch anymore.



“Psst! Midoriya-kun!” A quiet whisper comes from behind Izuku in class, somewhere on his right. They're using the time as a study hall, so there is no teacher in the room, but still...it's quiet. Izuku is focused on his work, so while he sort of *hears* the call, he isn't really *listening*.

“Midoriya!” This time it's a whisper-shout, and it catches his attention. He spins in his chair to see where it came from. His brows raise when his gaze lands on Ashido.

“Midoriya, come here!” She leans forward in her seat, hand gesturing wildly in an attempt to wave him closer.

He closes his notebook and slips from his chair, walking back to take the seat next to her. Kaminari has already shifted elsewhere.

“What?” He asks, half laughing. Her eyes are wide and she looks on the verge of a squeal; he can tell. Ashido Mina is nothing if not expressive.

“How on *earth* have you gotten Todoroki to sit with you for study halls?! I know you guys have been sitting together at lunch but *you* clearly joined *him*. He came right up to the desk next to you and sat down! It’s like a miracle!”

A small smile tugs one side of Izuku’s mouth as he tries not to give away his amusement. He looks over to where the other boy sits, head down in his book with hair falling forward over his eyes. Izuku wonders vaguely if it ever gets caught in that brow piercing he has. Todoroki seems completely oblivious to the fact that Izuku has gone, consumed by his work.

“No, it’s not. We’re friends,” he replies.

“*No one* is friends with Todoroki Shouto,” Ashido says seriously, eyes wide. “I mean, *look* at him! He’s like, like a God among men! Literally the best looking guy in our class!”

Izuku gives her a side-eye before returning his gaze to the quiet guy ahead of them. “I don’t think he knows that...” he whispers. “I don’t think he’d take it well, either. So don’t say anything.”

Golden eyes turn to him with disbelief. “Are you kidding?! I can’t even speak to him. He terrifies me.”

He snorts. “What? Why?”

“Because! He never smiles! I mean, he’s *gorgeous*, don’t get me wrong. But I feel like he kind of... hates everyone.”

Izuku laughs again. “He does not!”

Todoroki takes that moment to realize Izuku is gone from his desk, looking over his shoulder in confusion before landing eyes on Izuku where he sits. His expression doesn’t change, lips still a flat line as their eyes make contact. Izuku smiles, but Todoroki just turns back around.

“See?!” Ashido points out, but Izuku keeps smiling anyway.

“I think he just doesn’t totally understand social cues...” he mumbles, leaning close so only she can hear. “We’re friends. *Real* friends. But sometimes I think he just isn’t sure how to be? If that makes sense. He seems self-conscious about it.”

A pink brow lifts as Ashido’s eyes flick from Izuku to Todoroki. “So you’re going to teach him how...?” She wiggles her brows.

Izuku blushes. “Well, y-yeah...”

“Uh huh...” She winks and Izuku’s face goes up in flames.

“I-I’m gonna, um, get back to work, okay? Okay! Bye!” He quickly hops up and returns to his seat, slipping into it with his pulse pounding and ears thudding. This attempt at friendship isn’t some romantic *advancement*. The fact that Ashido would insinuate such a thing is—is—

“What?” One red and one blue eye regard Izuku with curiosity. His expression is no different from before, but the tone of his word rises just slightly at the end, which tells Izuku that Todoroki is interested. It’s been hard to learn his tells, but Izuku *is* learning. Usually, Todoroki is completely obtuse and inattentive. Of course, *today* is when he’s decided to care.

“You mumbled something about my name...” Todoroki explains, pale cheeks rosing slightly, blending with the color of the scar that surrounds his left eye.

Izuku’s heart pounds, and he fixes his eyes down toward the assignment he’s not yet started, setting his pen to the first line as though he’s beginning and doing his best to be nonchalant. “I did?” he asks, faking nonchalance.

He can feel that mismatched gaze weighing on him with confusion, and he sighs, looking up to finally meet it.

“Oh,” Todoroki says, face giving nothing away. Was he sad? Disappointed? It sort of sounded that way, but the guy was so hard to read...

“I mean, I was just saying to Mina that we’ve become good friends!” Izuku says brightly. “I guess I was just reflecting on what I have learned about you since we’ve started spending more time together.”

Todoroki’s brows furrow, nearly meeting in the middle. “Do you? Know a lot about me, that is.” He looks puzzled, and Izuku cocks his head.

“Y-yeah...? I think so,” he mumbles. “Maybe not *that* much... but it *feels* like a lot. More than others do anyway, right?”

After a moment, Todoroki nods. “I guess so.”

Izuku smiles, warmth blooming in his chest and taking root within his heart.



“SHOUTO!”

Shouto rolls his eyes, heaving a dramatic exhale as he pushes up from his desk.

“*SHOUTO!!*”

He takes his time walking to his door and opening it, then meanders his way into the hallway, where his father waits.

“When do you plan to give up this godawful styling, huh? I need you at the event tomorrow, looking *normal*. None of this ridiculous black and metal crap. I want you in a *suit!*”

He rolls his eyes again, crossing his arms and leaning against the wall. “Why does it matter?” he says dully. It really doesn’t; at least not to him. No one will care what he wears. No one except for Endeavor himself, whose opinion Shouto doesn’t

give a rat’s ass about.

“BECAUSE!” Endeavor shouts. “I’m not playing damage control this month! You will be *presentable* and *professional*, and that’s FINAL!”

His father never actually *does* play damage control. Shouto keeps a low key presence at any event he goes to, never wanting to be noticed. Maybe what his father *wants* is for him to be more noticeable. Well, that’s too bad.

Shouto huffs and stands upright. “Is that all?” he asks.

His father glares at him, red eyes burning with a flame that rivals his hair. “No.” He moves closer, leaning down into Shouto’s face. “You need to bring a date. I’ll have none of this crap that *my* son is an outcast. You aren’t. You’re the strongest person in that school and if that doesn’t make you damn desirable, I don’t know what will.”

**I z u k u ' s
brows shoot
to his hairline.**

Mismatched brows rise slightly in response, genuinely surprised. This is a new request. This, he’s never been required to do before.

“And if you *don’t* have one by this evening, I will get one *for* you.”

One red and one blue eye look down to the floor, not wanting to meet his gaze. Shouto really doesn’t know who he’d bring. He *doesn’t* have a bunch of people lusting after him, that’s for sure. People barely even speak to him at school, and it isn’t like he has some kind of fanclub following. Who the hell is he going to ask? He definitely does not want to end up with whoever his father will choose.

Endeavor frowns at him, figure hulking and casting a shadow over his entire form. Shouto doesn’t flinch.

“Is that all?” he finally repeats.

“For now.”

Without acknowledgment, Shouto turns back around to open his bedroom door, then closes it behind him, flopping onto his bed and closing his eyes for just five more blissfully silent minutes before he has to get ready for school.



Izuku drags himself to study hall today with a plan to take a *nap*. No work. No study. Just. Nap.

He had a really intense training session with All Might yesterday evening, and since then, his body has just felt *drained*. There’s nothing he wants more than sleep, and since he has some time during this period, he’s going to take full advantage.

Or at least, he *thought* he was going to.

Instead, the moment he sits down and drops his head to the desk, it shakes. Like, really shakes. Like *100 times per minute* shakes.

What the heck?

He lifts it to look around, wondering what is causing this small earthquake, and realizes that it is a bouncing leg from the desk to his left. He follows it up to see Todoroki staring at his hands, brow furrowed as though deep in thought. Izuku frowns.

“Uh... Todoroki?”

The other inhales sharply and jumps, as though surprised, and Izuku backtracks. “S-sorry! I didn’t mean to startle you!”

Ice and fire shift to look at him, widening. “Oh, you didn’t. It’s okay.”

Izuku doesn’t want to say that it’s *obvious* he had. Todoroki is *clearly* distracted and jumpy. But—is that a *blush* on his cheeks?!

It looks so out of place on his dark, punk demeanor. In that black clothing and grunge

styling, it’s *odd* to see such brightness on his face. But it’s there. Izuku’s *sure* it’s there. The color is so deep that it almost blends with the discoloration surrounding his left eye, and it makes Izuku curious.

Very curious.

“I-is something wrong...?” He decides to ask.

Todoroki clears his throat, shifting in his chair to face him.

Yep, definitely blushing. Now it tracks to his neck, too, and Izuku can’t help the small grin tugging at the corner of his mouth. It’s so cute.

“No. Nothing is wrong,” he says flatly. “But, I...” He huffs a breath and runs a hand through his hair, eyes darting to the side. Izuku’s curiosity only grows.

He looks back to Izuku again, seeming to regain his nerve. “My father requires that I bring someone with me to the Hero Ranking Gala tomorrow.”

Izuku’s brows shoot to his hairline. *The Hero Ranking Gala?! He can’t believe that Todoroki gets to go to that! Oh god, Izuku is so jealous! All those pro heroes and amazing sidekicks and oh my gosh, Todoroki is going! That’s so cool! What a neat perk of—*

“I want you to be my plus one.”

WHAT?!

Izuku suddenly slaps a hand over his mouth as everyone in the classroom turns to look at him. That was meant to be in his head, not aloud, and instead, he shouted it at maximum volume. Todoroki’s entire *face* is a burning red now, and he looks at the floor, as though upset.

“Oh, it’s okay. If you feel it’s that ridiculous, you don’t have to agree. I just thought—”

What? No! He can’t *possibly* think Izuku would pass this up.

“No, no!” Izuku waves his hands out in front of him, panicking. He *absolutely* wants to go, *definitely*

wants to be Todoroki's plus one. "I'd *love* to be your plus one!"

Those unique eyes grow wider as his lips curve into a small, but *definitely there*, smile. One Izuku has never seen before. It has warmth blooming in his chest and his own mouth breaking into a megawatt grin he only saves for rare occasions.

"It's a date!" he says, and Todoroki coughs, sputtering.

"It's, um. Yeah," he replies.

Izuku realizes how awkward that was and blushes *hard*. He didn't mean it like *that*. That came out wrong. He tries to explain. "Doesn't have to be a *romantic* date to be a date! Just like, a plan. A date on the calendar? I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable! It's not a romantic date, but just... like... a date in my planner... if that makes sense. I mean, I know it's tomorrow, so I don't actually need to write it down, but it happens at a particular time and—"

**Midoriya's
mother
laughs
heartedly.**

A laugh. Todoroki's *laugh* sounds in his ears and Izuku stops mid-sentence. He's never heard Todoroki laugh before. It's... *wow*, it's so different from what he expected. It's light and airy and *wow he's smiling so big*.

Well, not really. But really big for Todoroki, anyway.

"It's okay, Midoriya. I know what you mean. You don't have to..." He waves his hand around as if to mime Izuku's nonsensical ramblings.

Izuku smiles right back. "Okay. So, tomorrow?"

Todoroki nods. "Tomorrow."

And suddenly, Izuku doesn't feel so tired anymore.



The next day, Todoroki looks at himself in the mirror. He's decided to compromise. He *is* wearing a suit. It's just a maroon-colored one, with a black four-button vest and a silky black shirt underneath. His tie is also that dark, old-blood red color, and he's really quite the fan of how it all turned out. He's kept all of his piercings in, adding just a little mousse to his hair to have it looking purposefully windswept and stringy.

In all, he looks a little more *alternative* than professional, but he's heading to an awards ceremony, not a job interview. He slips into his combat boots and heads to the door. He promised Midoriya he'd stop by his place a bit early since the other said he wasn't sure what to wear. Shouto isn't sure what sort of help he can possibly be for him, considering his own apparently awful sense of style, but he doesn't want to be rude.

It only takes him about fifteen minutes to find his way to the Midoriya household, and a very kind woman who looks very much like Midoriya Izuku himself answers the door.

"Oh!" she says immediately, face bright and cheeks rounding. "You must be Todoroki! It's nice to meet you. I'm Midoriya Inko. Izuku is just in his room. I'll show you the way."

Shouto nods shyly and makes his way in, feeling a bit odd. Midoriya Inko does not linger on his scar at all, nor on his clothing. She simply seems glad to meet him, and that in itself is somewhat startling. He follows her down the short hallway to what is clearly Midoriya's space, with a wooden plaque hanging on the outside of his door, accented with some All Might hair and the name *Izuku*. The door quickly swings open to reveal its namesake.

"Todoroki!" Midoriya grins. "I'm so glad you're here! I am... Uh..." He scratches his head, looking down at his attire pointedly. "I'm not sure what to wear..."

Shouto looks down at his clothing as well, and he is... somewhat surprised. He had figured Midoriya wouldn't be the *most* stylish, given his awful tie

daily, but he'd thought he would at least be able to match *colors*. The boy wears a mustard green suit, pinstriped and accompanied by a red shirt and bowtie. Shouto does his best not to cringe.

"Yes... I can see. Let me see your closet."

Midoriya's mother laughs light-heartedly. "Yes, I think he could use your advice! I'll leave you two to it, then!"

Todoroki nods gratefully as she hums her way back down the hallway, then he follows Midoriya into his bedroom. The space is very clearly *Izuku*. It maintains the All Might theme, accompanied by various hero merchandise filling each shelf. Even his bed-spread is red, white, and blue in honor of his mentor.

Midoriya walks straight to a set of large, white doors, which fold open to reveal his closet. Shouto immediately begins to scrutinize. With Midoriya's green hair, he'd look really nice in some dark forest colors or some very crisp black colors. He looks from the closet, back to Midoriya, then back to the closet again as the boy paces nervously behind him.

"Uh... I have... Um... I might have some more things in my drawers, if there's nothing you like..."

Shouto turns to meet his green eyes, frowning. "Why would I need that? There's plenty here."

He reaches in to grab a black blazer and a dark pine colored shirt. Then he holds the blazer up for Izuku to see.

"Do you have any pants to go with this?"

Midoriya's brows lift. "Yes! I do." He shuffles through his drawers and pulls out a pair of black slacks that look about two sizes too big.

"No," Shouto responds flatly. "Those are too baggy."

Midoriya's eyes widen to the size of saucers. "What!?" He looks down at them in confusion, pulling out the tag. "No! They're my size! See?" He holds the tag up for Shouto to look at, but he brushes right past him, digging through his

drawers himself.

Something tighter... something tighter... Midoriya is a small guy. He would be *swimming* in those slacks. Besides--Shouto looks back at him one more time, observing the shape of his legs and behind--the guy could stand to show off his figure. He's built quite well.

Finally, he finds a pair of crisp, black skinny jeans and yanks them out of the packed drawer. "These," he says, turning. Midoriya looks at the pants curiously, holding them up in front of his legs.

"I think these are from a few years ago... I'm not sure if they'll even fit me..." His cheeks turn a cute shade of pink.

"They will."

Shouto grabs the dress shirt and the black blazer, handing them off for Midoriya to change into. "While you change, I'll find you a tie."

He turns his back to Midoriya as he hears his clothes shuffling. He quickly finds the space-saving hanger with ties, and learns that Midoriya owns exactly four: two red ones that match UA's traditional colors, one plain black, and one silver. He grabs the black one without hesitation and turns around to see Midoriya finishing up tucking in his shirt.

Shouto grabs his wrist. "Untucked."

Forest brows raise, but he pulls the remainder of his shirt out of his waistband. The pants fit well--skin-tight--but are a nice contrast to the blazer, which is relatively large and long.

"Here. This tie, too."

Midoriya nods, then turns toward his mirror to put it on. Shouto watches for about five seconds before it's too painful, then turns Midoriya to face him and ties it himself, ignoring the flush of embarrassment on his friend's face.

He steps back to take a look. Acceptable.

"I wish there was something I could do with my *hair*..." Midoriya whines. He musses it in the mirror,

and Shouto laughs softly. He *does* have really messy hair. Midoriya's scarred hands finally comb the sides and pull tight behind his head as he groans.

"It's hopeless," he says, laughing wryly.

Shouto tilts his head, eyes narrowing. "Actually..."

He steps forward to pull back on the lower half of Midoriya's hair, giving him the appearance of an undercut. "What do you think of that?"

Midoriya smiles nervously. "I, um... I dunno... Do you think I could pull it off?" One eye squints, as though he's unsure, uncomfortable. He scratches his cheek.

Shouto nods. "Absolutely. We still have an hour. Want to do it now?"

His friend whips around to look at him, surprised. He looks back to the mirror one more time, then down to his watch.

"Really?! You think we've got the time?"

"Yeah. I can do it."

The wrinkle of surprise on Midoriya's forehead deepens. "*You?*"

He shrugs.

Midoriya seems to hesitate for a second, but then meets Shouto's eyes over his shoulder in their reflection. "Well... okay."



The two of them enjoyed the awards ceremony *far* more than Shouto has in the past. It was nice to have a friend along for once, and it seemed most eyes were actually drawn toward Midoriya than himself for a change, which was a pleasant surprise.

Everyone complimented his friend's outfit, as well as his new hairstyle. The undercut had Midoriya looking about five years older, accentuating the rise of his cheeks rather than leaving them looking

rounded as his previous, fluffy haircut had. His face turned beet red any time someone noticed and stuck a microphone in his face with questions about his stylist, and then it was Shouto's turn to shift back and forth on his feet. By the end of the evening, everyone knew that Shouto had decided his look, and Midoriya was quick to shoot him an excited grin when the microphone shifted to him.

Shouto never has trouble in front of a microphone. It's more of the camera that makes him feel shy, but for some reason, with Midoriya's smile beside him, he felt far less self-conscious. If someone else had that much confidence in him, the very least he could do was replicate the same amount.

It's only the next morning when his cell phone rings with a number he doesn't recognize.

"Hello, this is Todoroki Shouto."

// He sort of...
likes it.

"Oh! Yes! Todoroki-san! My name is Orimitsu Kawaru, and I am calling you to see if you might be interested in setting up a meeting."

Shouto frowns. *Orimitsu Kawaru?* Why would she want to meet with *him*?

"May I ask the reason?"

"I like your style. And I'd like to dress you in the best. I think your appearance is unique and you could gain a pretty great following if you were--"

Click.

Shouto sits back in his bed, tilting his head to the headboard and closing his eyes.

What just happened?

The Orimitsu Kawaru had just called Shouto. The Orimitsu Kawaru likes his style...?

He looks down at his cell phone again, the background of which is now an awkward selfie of

him and Midoriya from the party last night. Shouto himself was smiling, as much as he *can* smile... which perhaps doesn't really look like one, while Midoriya was *beaming* in a way that brightened the whole picture.

When Shouto looked at himself, he usually saw his scar, his mismatched hair, the discomfort on his face. But in this image... not so much. In this image, he sees excitement and confidence, a guy with an alternative style that still somehow works. And works surprisingly well.

Midoriya certainly didn't seem ashamed to be seen with him. And his father hadn't even complained after all the positive attention the two of them had gotten. He and Midoriya were even featured in a few of the online articles about the event.

Something weird and warm lifts Shouto's chest, and he quickly climbs out of bed to look in the mirror. He looks himself up and down: the baggy, low slung black sweatpants he wears, and the loose-hanging red tank top with a faded band logo. He runs fingers through his stringy hair, pushing it back and *out* of his eyes for once, examining.

No one mentioned his scar aside from it being related to his aesthetic in the articles. Maybe... maybe he *doesn't* need to hide it so much as he'd thought before. He frowns, messing his hair so most of it falls to one side, then digs through the organizer on his dresser for a dark eye pencil. Shouto doesn't generally wear makeup, but he's had this from his sister a while back. It won't hurt to *try*...

He takes the pencil to his lower lid and tries scribbling it back and forth, then does the same to the top lid. It isn't smooth, so he rubs at it, creating something that looks like smoke around the edges. He squints at himself, then backs up, tilting his head at his reflection.

He sort of... *likes* it.

His phone rings again, the same number as before. Orimitsu-san! Hand shaking, he picks up the call.

"Hello, Todoroki Shouto."

"Yes. Todoroki-san! I'm so glad you picked up. I believe we were disconnected before. This is Orimitsu Kavaru calling again about signing on as your personal stylist, and perhaps even gaining some of your feedback on the other styles I am working on! I wanted to offer you some details before you agree or disagree... Would that be okay?"

Shouto plops down in his desk chair, spinning it absently. He looks at himself in the mirror one more time, trying hard to find that shy, self-conscious boy from just a few weeks ago. When he doesn't find him, he responds.

"Sure. That sounds great."



GO!
PLUS
ULTRA!



ロリータファッション

僕のヒーローアカデミア



ジャンプ!

麗日お茶子
常闇踏陰

trixirita

MILITARY CANDY



Yea
HAI-UR

A STITCH IN TIME SAVES LIVES (AND MAKES PEOPLE FALL IN LOVE)

OTA

If her sewing machine wasn't so heavy, Mina supposed, she would have thrown it, because if she got one more *God-forsaken* letter dropped through the shiny metal mail slot of her apartment door that was a flat white instead of a pronouncing pink, she might just lose it. *Sure*, maybe the company had decided to cut back on ink and print their acceptance letters on white paper now instead of their signature pink.

Yeah, no.

The only possible explanation that Mina could come up with was that the thin, haunting envelope that had just crept into the corner of her vision was not the fated acceptance letter from UA Fashion, but rather the condemning notice of her own failures. However, despite her imminent betrayal by such a harmless piece of paper, she could have no other reaction but that her heart rate increased exponentially, and her slender fingers shook with an unnatural vibrato. Her foot pressed anxiously into the pedal and—

The needle spun, the fabric crumpled, and her latest masterpiece was reduced to a tangled mess of color and thread.

How... perfect.

Even though her body was humming with anticipation, the pink girl couldn't find it in herself

to care in the slightest about the destruction, and instead — groans and curses notwithstanding — peeled herself up from her plush work chair and ambled down the dim hallway of her apartment to meet her doom.

UA Fashions. Musutafu, Japan.

And no, even as she prayed it was a trick of the cheap lighting in her run down apartment, the envelope remained a pasty white under her rosy fingers.

Her phone rang.

With a sigh, she fumbled the pink device out of her jean pocket. "Yello?" She slurred, shifting her phone to her shoulder to free her hand and tear open the letter.

"DID YOU OPEN IT YET?!" Kyoka Jiro, Mina's first — and only — friend from college, screeched loud enough that the purple haired girl probably blew

her own eardrums out.

“Kyoka, uh, actually, I—”

“OPEN IT, FOR GOD’S SAKE,” the woman on the other side ordered fiercely and Mina, with an unwilling sigh and eyeroll she knew Kyoka couldn’t see, ruffled the shredded envelope against the phone speaker.

“That good enough for you? It’s open,” she drawled, regretting not even trying to add some fake inflection into her tone.

Kyoka Jiro, the recording artist that she was, was not a stranger to the voice and its many qualities and implications. From this, Mina knew she could tell that no, Mina would not be accepted into the Spring Couture show at UA Fashions.

“Oh...Mina. I’m sorry. I just... I really thought this was the one.” Jiro’s voice sounded regretful and yet somehow cold. “Your portfolio has really gotten better, I swear it—”

“It’s fine, Kyoka,” Mina sighed, running a finger through her curly hair. “Next time, right?”

“Yeah. Knock ‘em dead, why don’t ya?”

“Aye, aye, captain,” Mina chuckled sardonically into the receiver, only relaxing when the line clicked off and she was able to slog off to her desk and collapse with a huff into her fluffy chair.

As she did, she noticed the tangled mess of fabric and ruined stitching in her machine, and while her fingers itched to fix it, her body remained heavy and motionless in the chair. With a toss that sent her phone flying off her desk and a groan of agony escaping her lips, Mina finally found herself turning her full attention to the envelope.

Miss Mina Ashido.

Ah.

While we appreciate your creativity and expression

Well.

We regret to inform you that—

“We cannot offer you a position in this years show, yada, yada, yada” Mina pouted, pink lower lip poking out just barely.

Her perfectly manicured stiletto nails punched holes into the paper with how hard she grabbed it, and it only fueled her frustration when she shook the paper to get the nagging reminder away from her. A tormented scream ripped her throat raw when she finally got the letter to detach and she slumped impossibly deeper into her plush, pink armchair.

There was a knock on the door.

“Oh what now?” the bubblegum girl hissed, picking herself up from her self-loathing party and stalking to the door. “Another letter to tell me *‘what great potential I have?’*”

It was unfortunate, Mina decided, that this all had to happen now. The young woman had always prided herself on her bubbly and bright personality — she’d been told that her smile was as white as pearls — and how she was an excellent communicator all throughout high school and college. Whoever was knocking on her door at that moment though, was about to see a more... treacherous side of Mina that she was not as proud of, but was *severely* sunken into at this point.

With a face as blank as stone and a grip like a wrestler, Mina threw open the door. She was halfway through a ‘whadda you want’ when she was punched square in the face.

Hard.

“Holy crap! I’m so sorry!” A man’s voice punctured her ears as she grabbed her cheekbone, already feeling the beginnings of a bruise start to blossom. “Are you okay?”

“Am I—” Mina began to snarl, but dropped it when she met the beet red and apologetic of a blonde man — couldn’t have been older than her — with the buffest arms and a *karate uniform*. No wonder his punch hurt like the ninth circle of Hell.

“I was going to knock again, I didn’t even realize the door was open!” the man stammered, his mannerisms entirely betraying his intimidating

appearance — that was due to the black belt tied securely around his midsection.

Something inside Mina — perhaps her more personable side — kept her from punching him right on back.

“N-No, yeah, no, I’m fine. It’s all good,” she bit out through a wince. “Um, can I... help you? Aside from being a good punching bag?”

Not. Professional. At. All.

The blonde chuckled, and Mina saw a fluffy tipped tail swish behind him. It shouldn’t have taken her by so much surprise as it did — quirks were nothing new — but she found her eyes widening nonetheless.

“Oh, help, yeah.” The man righted himself, shifting his weight from foot to foot, then bowed low. “My name is Mashirao Ojiro. I own the dojo, downtown?” He straightened, and fixed Mina with a grin, “I heard you were a clothing designer?”

Mina blinked once. Twice. Really? He had heard of her?

“Y-Yeah, that’s me.” She swallowed thickly, leaning her weight into her right hip for balance. “What do you need?”

Mashirao chuckled lightly again, tail swishing behind him, and his cheeks turning crimson. “D-Do you mind if I come in? It’s a bit of a long story.”

Part of Mina screamed that *no*, she should not let a black belt stranger into her apartment, but that *dang happy reputation* she had built up was telling her to *do it. It’s the nice thing, after all.*

“Come on in.” She flashed him a toothy, polite smile and backed out of the doorway. Her cheekbone stung some as she smiled, but she tried to hide a second wince when Mashirao thanked her so timidly. Was this man really a dojo owner?

“Anything to drink?” she chirped, slapping on a cheery hostess persona and padding into her kitchen. “Wine? Tea? Water?”

“Water is fine, please.” Ojiro smiled sheepishly, setting himself down on her pink couch. Mina watched as his dark eyes flitted around the room, taking in the decorations, the sewing machine, Mina herself standing at the bar in the kitchen filling a crystal cup with tap water. She wondered — as she followed his gaze — what he thought of it. Perhaps it was too... pink ... for his standards.

“So.” She punctuated the syllable by clanking her own cup of water on her desk. “Story time?” She asked, settling herself back at her desk chair and crossing her legs over it in an attempt to appear more hospitable.

“Ah, right.” Ojiro cleared his throat. “So, awhile ago, I met my girlfriend — her name’s Toru, by the way — and she’s the *best* girl I’ve ever met — no offense.” Mina was slowly realizing this guy was one of the overly polite types. He kept his hands crossed in his lap, his giant tail respectfully still, his feet glued to the carpet. “And she’s always, *and I mean always*, wanted to model.” He licked his lips awkwardly, then locked eyes with the pink designer. “The only thing is, she’s invisible.”

There was a beat of silence.

// And her little heart just couldn’t say no to him.

Then another.

“Invisible?” Mina raised a perfectly manicured eyebrow leaning in. “Dang. That’s... wow. Okay.”

“Yeah,” Ojiro chuckled bitterly. “Anyway, she’s friends with another friend of yours — Kyoka Jiro? And she heard from her that you were looking for employment, and while she hasn’t said anything to me about it... I think she’s hoping I’ll do something about it. There’s...” He huffed in a breath that sucked in his cheeks and blew it out again with a

shake of his head and chuckled looking into Mina's dark eyes. "There's actually a lot of things I think she's hoping I'll do. You know?"

Mina wasn't a genius, nor was she good at reading romantic relationships at all, but she knew that sheepish smile and the only half-guilty look in Ojiro's eyes.

Marriage.

And her little heart just couldn't say *no* to him.

"F-Fine," she sighed, grabbing the rest of her glass of water — wishing it was a pinot instead. "I'll help you, and no—" She held up a daintily manicured finger to shush Mashirao as he opened his mouth, "—no, you are not paying. This is in favor of Toru and Jiro, got it? It's the least I can do."

She sagged her shoulders tiredly, but the motion betrayed the genuine smile that was stretching across her pink lips. "On top of that," she stood from her chair and crossed her living room to the island in her open kitchen where a thick leather sketchbook lay open, "Please keep in mind that I'm *not* a professional. I'll do my very best—"

"And that's all that matters," Ojiro cut her off, his voice a deadly kind of serious that reminded Mina that he was a karate master. "I just want to make her happy."

A giddy sort of thrill infiltrated Mina's bones and he bounced a little more excitedly back to her desk, sketchbook in hand and her mind buzzing with inspiration.

"Alright, lover boy, what were you thinking?"



"Hey, Kiri, I'm finally calling in that favor you owe me."

"What— Mina? The one from middle school?" Eijiro Kirishima's voice crackled to life over the phone, thick with sleep or just pure exhaustion, Mina didn't know, and — glancing at perpetually ticking watch — she didn't care.

"Yes, the stupid one from middle school, Kiri it's actually kinda a big deal."

"Ei? What's happening? Who are you on the phone with?" Mina could hear the gruff and deep voice of a certain Bakugou Katuski, Eijiro's boyfriend.

"Mina. Go back to sleep, I'll be back in a sec," Eijiro whispered and then his voice came back full volume. "Wait, is this the favor that said if you got me that date with the guy in third year that I would do something for you when I was rich and famous, or the one where you then went on that date with the third year for me because I got scared and thought he was a creep so you went instead and I said I would hook you up with a famous person when I was rich and famous?"

Mina didn't actually remember that second one, but now seemed like as good a time as any to cash in.

"Both?" She raised her voice up a few octaves to sound more innocent over the phone, though she knew Eijiro didn't become a detective for the police by being easily fooled.

"Ugh, Minaaaaaaaaa!" He drawled through the speaker. "Why now?"

"It's... It's a really long story, but the short version is that I'm designing a fashion show for a model and her husband and I have one: no money, and two: no venue."

"So what do you need me for?" The redhead on the other side of the line sighed exasperatedly. "You have money thanks to Bakugou and his job and because he works on *movies*, you know people who can book me a runway!" Mina whined, slouching on her couch.

She knew it was almost midnight, but Ojiro had said that the custom ring would be done in a week for their anniversary and he said that she *technically* didn't have to put the fashion show on the exact day of their anniversary, but Mina was a romantic at heart. Now if only Kirishima would help her find a venue...

"Fine," Eijiro sighed. "Look, Bakugou got a concussion at work yesterday, and so he's not

really up to making a phone call right now. Can I get back to you in the morning with a venue?"

Mina squealed into the phone and jumped so high she nearly dropped it onto her hardwood kitchen floor. "Thank you, Ei!" she cheered. "You're the best!"

There was a yawn from her best friend in High School. "Yeah, yeah. I'll transfer something into your account in the morning. But!" he paused, and Mina could just imagine him holding up a long nailed finger (he always had nicer hands than her, and he worked with dead bodies for a living). "You owe me *big time*. And I don't mean standing in for me on a date — which doesn't even really matter because I would never skip a date with Katsu — or driving me to McDonalds. I mean like... like *buying* me the car to drive to McDonalds."

Mina couldn't help but giggle, although she knew Ei was entirely serious. She hated to mooch off of him like that, but she *needed* for this to work — for both her and Ojiro.

"You got it, Riot," she teased, and hung up, letting the detective go back to his peaceful sleep with his concussed boyfriend.

Operation get Toru Hagakure a modeling gig and Mashirao Ojiro a fiance were a go.



"Alright, Mina, they're going to be here any minute. Game face: *on*," the pinkette chanted to herself.

Her black heeled boots clacked along the marbled floors of the convention hall KiriHima and Bakugou had managed to book for her. She owed them a sizeable favor in return, but it would be worth it if this fashion show ran smoothly.

"Mina!"

Mina hoped she didn't turn around too excitedly when she heard Ojiro's voice. He was proudly walking towards her with his hands in a nicely pressed pair of slacks. There was a floating sweater arm wrapped around his elbow, and Mina

could only assume that was Toru.

She really was invisible.

"H-Hey there!" She smiled, stepping forward to the couple. She could easily tell from even a distance that Ojiro was just beaming, and a little closer look revealed that the coat pocket of his jacket was a little more creased than usual.

Ring.

"Thank you so much for doing this." A bubbly female voice chirped. "It really does mean a lot. A lot of agencies won't work with a model who doesn't have any looks."

Mina chuckled awkwardly and rubbed the back of her neck. "You wouldn't believe how picky they are about clothing contracts either. Now." She clapped her pink hands together. "Let's look at some clothes!"

"I'll leave you to it." Ojiro smiled and patted Toru's arm affectionately before pressing a kiss to the thin air that Mina could only assume was the girl's cheek.

"Alright." Mina beamed gesturing over to a black table, "Here's what we have. I put together three outfits for you to wear during the show! I hope they look alright!"

Toru's floating figure paused when it reached the table, then the girl jumped high into the air. "I LOVE IT!" She squealed, reaching out to stroke the glittering dresses and skirts. "The amount of colors and the sequins and the texture — they're so soft!" she cooed, and her sweater top wiggled around slightly.

Mina couldn't help but be affected the woman's infectious personality. A large smile spread across her face and she gathered the outfits into her arms.

"Well then, let's go try these on and then I can alter them if I need to. Then we can start the show in a few hours, yeah?"

"Yeah!"



"It's show time!" Eijiro Kirishima cheered, pushing his way into the dressing room. "Is everything ready back here?"

"Mmhmm!" Mina smiled, adjusting her mesh black top. "Thank you for doing this, Ei."

The redhead shrugged. "It's nothing, really. But you do owe me."

"Definitely." Mina nodded, "Is Jiro ready?"

"Yup. She's gonna get the crowd hyped up and then we'll be ready. Speaking of crowd, there's apparently a scout from Yuuei Fashions out there. Hizashi Yamada?"

Mina's mouth fell open. "H-Hizashi? *Yamada*? Is *here*?"

"Heck yeah, Mina!" Eijiro grinned, "You never know, this could be your shot to make it big!"

"But I applied to Yuuei and—"

Eijiro didn't seem interested in what Mina had to say as he pirouetted on his heel and stalked over to the backstage door. "You'll do great Mina, now it's time to start!"

"Time to start?" Toru's voice squeaked from the changing screen. "Already?"

"You'll be great, Toru." Mina smiled and gestured for the girl to come out from hiding. "And hey, Ojiro is going to be front and center watching you."

If Toru could blush, Mina would have made the invisible girl's face turn tomato red. She exhaled shakily then emerged from behind the screen.

The outfit she wore was tailored expertly to her form, hugging every curve and yet still remaining modest. It glittered and shone in the fluorescent lights when she walked, and a rainbow of bright colors and textured fabrics made her look like a walking goddess.

"I'm ready." She said, and although Mina couldn't see her face, she could hear the smile in her voice.

"Then go on!" Mina cheered, "Knock 'em dead!"

Knock 'em dead Toru did. She strutted the runway with a grace and elegance seen only otherwise on supermodels and made the clothing bend to her will. Mina at one point peaked out from the backstage curtains and saw Ojiro sitting front and center, beaming and clapping louder than anyone else.

Cute.

"Mina! I did it! I did it!" Toru squealed, launching her smaller frame into the pink girl's form.

"Yeah you did."

Toru flung herself out of Mina's arms like a bullet and jumped onto Ojiro, clothed legs hugging his waist as he swung her around.

"I love you, Mashirao!" She screamed and the tailed man's coat ruffled where she buried her face into his sleeve.

// Alt was all thanks to them, if she really thought about it.

Ojiro whispered something into her ear that sounded suspiciously like "I love you too" and Mina's heart swooned.

Then, all time seemed to stop when the blonde man set the girl down on her feet and knelt to the ground, pushing aside his coat and reaching inside to produce the little black box he had shown Mina before in private.

"Toru, I love you with *everything* in me. Each day I've spent with you makes me happier than I could have *ever* imagined. Would you do me the honor of spending every day with me as my wife?"

Mina almost didn't hear Toru's yes over all the screaming.

"What a happy couple." An older man's voice cooed from behind her and Mina's skin jumped at the sudden guest. Whirling around though, she found it wasn't a stranger at all, but rather the strikingly tall figure of Hizashi Yamada, one of the most prominent fashion icons in all of Japan.

His long golden hair fell in straight waves around his elbows and his wire rimmed glasses made his emerald eyes glint in the light of the setting sun.

"H-Hiazashi Yamada!" Mina breathed, almost forgetting to bow in hello. "M-My name is Mina Ashido and—"

"I know your name." Yamada waved a hand dismissively. "And there's no need to bow. As far as I'm concerned, you stand on equal ground with me tonight. Artist to artist."

Mina's eyes nearly bugged out of her head. "R-really?"

Yamada laughed, a booming sound that drew an involuntary smile from Mina's lips. "Heck yeah kid! Your work is stunning with a capital S!" He winked, "Actually, that's why I came back here to talk to you. We just had a spot open up in our studios for a freelance designer, and I wanted to know if you'd want to come give it a shot. The hours are super flexible and—"

"YES!" Mina didn't even give him a chance to finish before she was nodding enthusiastically. "I'd love to!"

Yamada grinned and fished a business card out of his pocket. "Call me sometime tomorrow and we can get things settled, yeah?"

Mina nodded and watched in awe as the tall man ambled away, dazzling smile sending women staggering to the side. Was she dreaming?

She pinched herself.

Definitely not a dream.

A quick glance over her shoulder revealed the happy couple to be holding each other and talking excitedly, Toru practically *bouncing* with energy.

It was all thanks to them, if she really thought about it. She wouldn't have thought of such a concept on her own -- an invisible model and a bright color palette to showcase it. She was happy for them, too, with the way they looked into each other's eyes like there was no one else in the room. Maybe she would have that someday.

Mina called Yamada the next day. It was time to set the next stage.



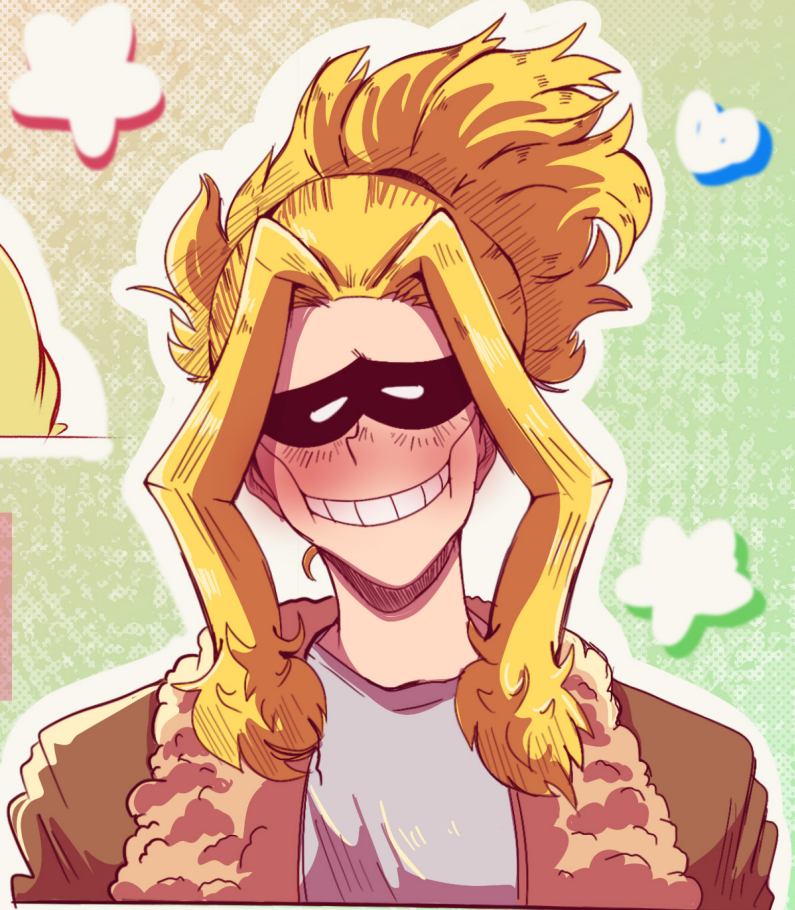
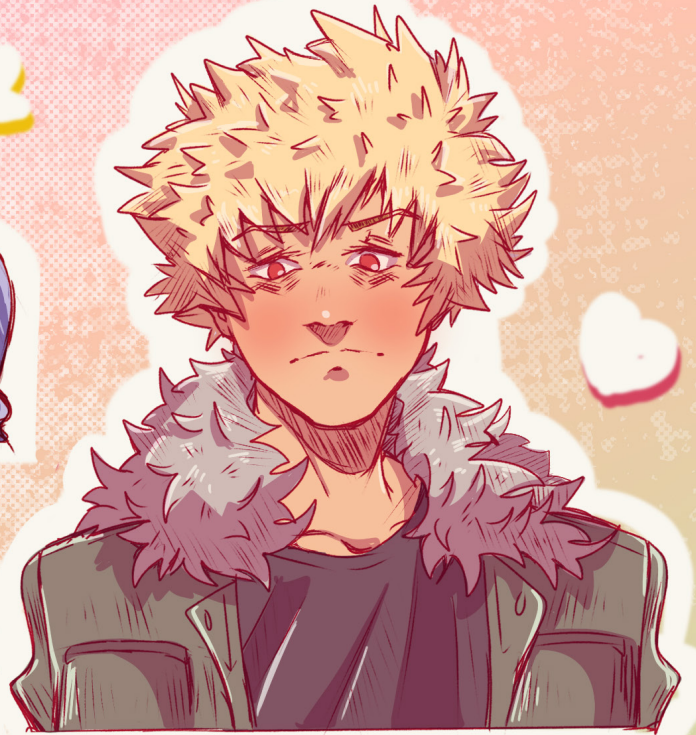
GO!
PLUS
ULTRA!



♥ushipurin♥



ZHEILLA027



KALEIDOSCOPE
A BNHA ALTERNATIVE FASHION ZINE

ONE COLOR TOO MANY

SMURFEE

“So, which color would you like?”

Momo watches as Denki surveys the spread between them. Shimmering serpentine greens, iridescent violets, sparkling blues - even striking reds and eye-popping pinks. Painting her nails is a well-established pastime of hers, and her collection can be daunting to the uninitiated. She isn't that adventurous with her choice in outfits (with a quirk like hers, she usually prioritized function over fashion), but she takes a lot of pride in making a statement with her nails.

Denki spends a good minute considering his choices: cupping his chin, his tongue sticking out of the corner of his mouth. It's like he's deciding his next move in a game of strategy.

“I want all of them,” he says resolutely.

Momo laughs. “That might be a little hard.”

The two of them meet for these late night study sessions almost every week, sometimes multiple times a week. It began when Momo helped Denki survive his first set of midterms at UA, and afterwards the two of them decided to make it a regular thing. As a reward for working so hard the first few hours, they often treated themselves to nail painting, face masks, or even watching the latest episode of Denki's favorite anime together. It is a great way for the two of them to decompress

from the constant stress of hero training.

Denki's lips curve into an impish grin. “Yeah, you're probably right, as per usual. I at least want a different color on every finger though. Ooh wait,” he says, leaning forward. “Maybe go for a different shade of purple on each, make my hands a drawn-out gradient or something!”

Momo blinks. “Wow, that's a great idea. I never would have thought of that.” She reaches for the lightest shade of purple, a whitish lavender accented by a faint shimmer. She shakes the small bottle lightly before unscrewing the cap and gathering a small bit of polish onto the plastic brush. “Let's go for it.”

Still grinning, Denki stretches out a hand, letting Momo hold it steady as she applies the first coat. “I bet Hitoshi will get a kick out of it,” he says slyly.

“I'm sure he will,” Momo replies, smiling. Finishing the first two nails, she searches for the next shade

of purple, readjusting her posture on the bed to get a better angle.

Out of the corner of her eye, she notices Denki watching her work with intense interest. Having been friends with him for a while now, she's more than familiar with that look - the dead giveaway that he's stewing on something. Contrary to his usual sunny demeanor, Denki has a lot on his mind.

"What's wrong?" Momo asks, shifting her grip on his hand.

"Hm? Oh, nothing," Denki says, glancing away and taking interest in something across the room.

Momo waits, concentrating on her work and letting him take his time.

"It's just..." Denki continues, eyes still trained on a distant corner of the room. "I really appreciate what you do for me. Not many people can say they have a friend who helps them ace their exams *and* paints their nails."

"Ace your exams?" Momo asks, raising an eyebrow.

"Well, by my standards, at least," Denki says, grinning. "If it weren't for your study sessions, I would have flunked out of UA a long time ago."

"That's not true," Momo replies, reaching for the next color.

"See?" Denki says, slapping his free hand to his forehead. "And you're incredibly supportive and nurturing and modest...like, sometimes I really wonder what I add to this equation."

Momo laughs gently. "You add plenty, Denki. I sincerely enjoy being your friend."

Putting his hand down, Denki cracks a smile. "Well, thank goodness for that. Where else am I gonna get nails like these?" He lifts up the hand Momo just finished and flourishes the eye-catching purple gradient.

Momo smiles and takes his other hand. She can tell something is still eating at Denki, but she

knows from experience that it's better not to press him too much. He'd likely just dismiss it again. If he needs to talk about something with her further, he'll come to her when he's ready.

Unless he won't.



Days tick by, then weeks. Their study sessions together become less frequent, and then they stop entirely. Denki starts acting increasingly distant around her - cagey, even. Momo hopes it's because he's spending more time with his boyfriend, like she often encouraged him to do. The hero course leaves so little time for personal relationships: sometimes it forces you to prioritize.

But on the other hand, she misses their late night hangouts. She often finds teaching someone else helps her learn the material better herself. Plus, she truly enjoyed Denki's company. His positive, carefree attitude helps pull her out of her negative, self-doubting spirals. His personality pairs well with his quirk. He's a human capacitor: taking in her excess negative energy whenever it's much for her to handle alone. Without him as a regular factor in her life, that negative energy becomes a little overwhelming.

After a few weeks like this, however, Momo begins to notice she isn't the only one Denki seems to be avoiding. Whenever the class arranges an impromptu weekend baking party or a video game tournament, or even when they all spontaneously decide to go and train at the pool together, Denki is often the only one not there.

Living in the same dorm means the class does a whole lot together; or at the bare minimum, they are highly attuned to each other's comings and goings. But whenever Denki is absent, no one can say for sure where he is. Not even Hitoshi.

One of the loudest, most flamboyant members of their class just up and disappears, week after week, right under their noses.

Even still, Momo is more than ready to put it out of her mind. Denki still has perfect attendance in class, and what he does in his free time is not her

business. Another downside to dorm life is the limit it puts on personal privacy, and Momo tries her best to respect the little that remains.

At least until the perfect opportunity presents itself.

One afternoon, as Momo and Kyouka sit studying together on a sofa in the common room, Hitoshi walks in with an uncharacteristically haggard look on his face.

“Jeez, what happened to you?” Kyouka deadpans, glancing up from her book. “You look like you haven’t slept in weeks. Oh wait...”

Hitoshi casually flips her off and turns to Momo. “Remember how I told you I’ve been worried about Denki lately?”

Momo nods, involuntarily sitting up a little straighter.

**// Midoriya's
mother
laughs
lightheartedly.**

“Well, I just saw him walk off towards the train station.”

Momo purses her lips. “Where is he going?”

“I have no clue,” Hitoshi responds. “But I know how we can find out.”

“Like, as in tail him?” Kyouka says. “That’s not a very good boyfriend thing to do.”

Hitoshi glares at her. “He’s not giving me a lot of options. He’s been acting weird for weeks, and when I try and ask him about it like a normal person, he just blows it off. So, are you in or out?”

“I’m in,” Momo says, rising from the sofa.

“Well, I guess that means I’m in as well,” Kyouka smirks, rolling her eyes. “He’s my dumb friend too, after all.”



By some small miracle, Hitoshi and the girls manage to reach the station just in time to catch Denki’s train. They shuffle into a car slightly behind their friend’s and watch as he takes a seat, setting down a nondescript shopping bag and sliding on a pair of headphones to weather through the train ride.

Which turned out to be a lot longer than his three tails anticipated.

They sit helplessly as the train passes through station after station, watching as droves of passengers deplete and renew themselves at every stop and keeping an eye on Denki through the windows separating their cars.

Finally, after an agonizing eternity, Hitoshi catches Denki exiting at a station deep in the heart of Tokyo. The three of them are too frantic to catch the name of the station, but they know they’re a long way from Musutafu.

Shuffling out of the crowded car, past scores of elbows and awkward glances, the three watch as Denki calmly makes his way through the station to an escalator taking them back to street level. They follow as closely as they can, using the cover of the crowd to conceal themselves from their quarry.

But as soon as they reach the streets again, they can’t find a trace of the electric blonde anywhere. They’ve lost him to the endless sea of shuffling passersby.

The three of them stand around in silence for a few minutes, shifting on their feet and weighing their options. Surveying the bustling area around the station, they slowly start to realize where Denki has brought them. Mixed in with the usual parade of business suits and school uniforms are a trickle of brightly colored outfits, voluminous lace dresses, and the occasional pro hero cosplay. Harajuku. The heart of Tokyo’s fashion scene.

“Dammit,” Hitoshi grits. The chances of spotting their friend in this mess are slim to none. It might be more worthwhile to just wait him out and catch him when he returned to the station, whenever that would be.

“Wait, there he is!” Kyouka cries, pointing to a street corner a good fifteen meters away.

Sure enough, it’s their beloved electric blonde - but in the time that he was out of sight, he underwent a complete transformation. Gone were his usual street clothes: his new outfit is incredibly striking: a black t-shirt printed with a lithograph of Yuri Gagarin in his cosmonaut suit, ripped black skinny jeans held together by safety pins and stretched over a pair of tights patterned by comic book pages, a pair of studded black platform boots, and a black cotton face mask. The whole ensemble is topped off with a small black handbag painted with a red handprint and stacks and stacks of gleaming silver bracelets and rings. He looks arrestingly confident, straight off the stage of a visual kei performance.

Even from this distance, Momo can just make out a glint of purple on his fingertips: the last of the nail polish she’d applied all those weeks ago. She’s impressed the polish has lasted so long, and flattered that Denki didn’t just wash it off.

The blonde is talking to a group of tourists, laughing as they move in to take a picture with him. He throws up a peace sign as the shot is taken, smiling with his eyes over his black face mask.

He looks happy. Content.

For a brief moment, Momo wonders if they have a right to intrude on this secret world of his. It’s clearly a sanctuary for him: somewhere he comes when the stress of hero training becomes unbearable.

But then she thinks of all the times he’d blow her off, misdirecting her questions with answers that kept his true feelings hidden. This may be a sanctuary, a temporary reprieve, but she knows her friend. He needs to talk.

Momo takes a step forward, making her way

towards Denki. The tourists have left now, and he’s pulled off to the side, checking his phone. Behind her, she can sense Kyouka and Hitoshi’s hesitance - they probably came to the same conclusions she had about what Denki is really doing here - but eventually, they follow too.

“Hi, Denki,” Momo says, reaching him.

Glancing up from his phone, the blonde’s eyes widen. “Momo! What are you doing here?” Looking over his shoulder, he notices the other two approaching behind her. “Hitoshi, Kyouka! Didn’t expect to see you guys here, what are the odds?” He grabs the back of his head and laughs nervously.

“We’re really sorry for following you here...” Momo starts.

“Speak for yourself, I’m not sorry about anything,” Kyouka says. “Fess up, Jammingway. What’ve you been doing all these weeks? We’re worried about you.”

Denki tugs his mask off and frowns. “Aw, I’m sorry for making you worry. This is just where I come to let off steam. I didn’t realize...”

“It’s okay, Denki,” Hitoshi interjects. “I just wanted to know what you’ve been up to.”

Looking at his boyfriend, Denki suddenly looks close to tears, at a loss for what to say. The full weight of his secrets is finally catching up to him.

Momo takes a chance and pulls him into a hug. “It’s really okay, alright? We just wanted to make sure *you* were okay.”

Denki hugs her back, sniffing lightly. Kyouka pulls out a handkerchief and hands it to him.

“It’s just.... I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have been so secretive, sneaking off all the time like that. I just... wanted to take care of this problem myself, you know? All this stress. Like, you already do so much for me. I didn’t want to give you this burden too.”

Momo listens in silence, rubbing her friend’s back carefully as he dries his eyes with the handkerchief. His mascara and eyeliner are

starting to smear.

An idea comes, like a butterfly landing on a flower stem. Pulling away, she looks Denki in the eyes. “You know what? I know something you can do for me. And Hitoshi and Kyouka, if they want.”

“What?” Denki asks hopefully.

Momo grins, a hint of mischief in her eyes. “I want you to teach me how to be a Harajuku fashionista.”



“Are you really sure I’d look good in this?” Momo asks, brows furrowed.

“Definitely!” Denki responds, handing her a pair of neon green coveralls. “I mean, as drop dead gorgeous as you are, I bet you could pull off anything, but this is a good place to start if you’re new to street fashion.”

Momo blushes and takes the clothes.

// Denki smiles faintly, a trace of his usual glowing self starting to show through again.

For the rest of the afternoon, as Hitoshi and Kyouka decided to make their way back to the dorms, Momo had followed Denki around from store to store, patiently trying on every outfit he’d thrown at her and letting the boy hem and haw until he found her the perfect ensemble. It hasn’t happened yet, but that isn’t Denki’s fault. Momo just felt a little... out of her element, and he wanted to make sure they found something that she felt comfortable in.

Stepping out of the dressing room, Momo walks over to the mirrors, where Denki sits waiting on a bench. “How do I look?”

Denki cups his chin. “Give me a turn.”

Momo obliges, showing off every angle of the ensemble: a plain white graphic tee paired with white platform boots, all built around the striking neon green coveralls.

“Hm... it looks great, but I feel like it’s missing something,” Denki says. Scanning the nearby clothing racks, his eyes light up. He darts over and grabs a white backpack emblazoned with a bright rainbow. He hands the bag to Momo. “There, now it’s a statement.”

Momo smiles, giving him another turn with the backpack slouched over her shoulder and putting a hand to her cheek. “You think so?”

“Uh-huh!” Denki says, nodding furiously. He glances down at his feet. “Honestly, I wish I looked half as good as you when I rock my looks.”

Momo’s smile drops. “Okay, that right there. We need to talk about that.”

“About what?” Denki asks, brows furrowing.

“How you put me on a pedestal only to tear yourself down,” Momo says gently. “You ought to say something good about yourself every once and awhile.”

Denki shuffles his feet and smiles sheepishly. “Yeah, I guess you’re right? I just can’t think of too many good things to say really... I’m the class idiot, I barely have a handle on my quirk, I’m loud and obnoxious... and I kept a part of my life secret even from the people who matter the most to me.”

Momo frowns, a pang running through her heart. “Denki...”

She sets the rainbow backpack on the fitting room’s bench and pulls her friend into a hug, hoping against hope the poor boy wouldn’t start crying again, because this time she would only dissolve into tears with him. “I can think of so many good things to say about you,” she says into his shoulder. “Like how you’re kind and considerate, and you’re willing to give everyone a chance, even to those who may seem a little rough around the edges at first.”

"I think I know exactly who you're talking about," Denki says with a faint laugh. "But those things are kind of a given, right? Like, everyone should do their best to be nice."

"But you do it so well! Remember when Hitoshi had his exam to get into the hero course? Who was the first person to try and talk to him?"

"That's only because I had a massive crush on him..." Denki says, glancing away and running a hand through his hair.

Momo pulls away and shakes her head. "No. I have full confidence that you would have done it regardless, crush or no crush. That's just the kind of person you are. You want everyone to feel welcome. But if you need more, I've got more: you're incredibly talented at languages and auditory learning. You're top of the class in English."

"Yeah, that's like the one subject you don't need to tutor me in."

"Exactly!" Momo says, crossing her arms. "And you're so knowledgeable about current trends and pop culture and fashion - stuff I don't know the first thing about. Just look how well you're helping me today," she says, gesturing to her outfit.

Denki smiles faintly, a trace of his usual glowing self starting to show through again.

"But most importantly, you do something for me that no one else can do," Momo continues. "When I let myself spiral into negativity, you're the one who pulls me out again. Our weekly study sessions aren't just for you. They're for me too. Without them, quite honestly, I haven't been feeling the best. My exam scores have even dropped."

Denki looks up at her in shock. "...do I really make that much of a difference?"

Momo smiles. "Of course you do! Why do you think we chased you all the way here?"

"I guess that was pretty excessive," Denki laughs.

Momo puts her hands on her hips. "So, do you think you can say one nice thing about yourself

before we keep shopping? It might even give me enough confidence to finally pick an outfit."

"Okay, here goes," Denki says, pretending to roll up his sleeves. "I... know every single word of *The Bee Movie*."

Momo tries to give him a disapproving scowl, but winds up collapsing into a fit of laughter. Denki joins her, earning them a slew of annoyed sideways glances from the other occupants of the fitting room.

When they both recover, Momo manages to give her friend a hard stare. "Okay, for real this time."

Denki swallows. "Well... I really love my friends, and I'd like to think I'd do anything for you guys. And I think... one of my favorite things is whenever I manage to brighten your days in any small way. I know I haven't been doing that a lot lately, and part of it was because I thought I couldn't anymore, with how stressed I've been feeling lately..." He looks at her, dead serious. "Thank you for proving me wrong."

Momo smiles. "Anytime," she says, pulling him in for one last hug. "Now let's work on finding me the perfect outfit."



It's a cool evening, with the last dregs of sunlight casting long flickering shadows, but the streets of Harajuku are as busy as ever.

The usual crowd of daylight city-goers has been replaced by the bustling, brightly colored evening throes. But no pair shines quite as vividly, however, as the couple striding their way down the center of the sidewalk, arms linked and chins held high and proud as they show off their looks. As far as Momo is concerned, they look pretty damn good, but even more importantly is how happy her partner looks. She hasn't seen Denki smile like this in weeks.

He's dressed in a similar style to what he had on the day they first tailed him, something in the genre Momo had since learned was called *angura kei* - a darker, more gothic strain of the more all-

encompassing visual kei. Denki is looking stunning in a pair of laced up thigh high platform boots, a red graphic skirt, and a white graphic tee, all topped off by a sharp black leather bomber jacket and paired with a black studded shoulder purse. His gleaming smile does well to attract the glances of the faces shuffling past.

Denki gives Momo's arm a comforting squeeze as they make their way through the crowd, a subtle reminder to walk proud and enjoy the attention they're receiving.

It had taken them an entire afternoon, but they eventually settled on a look that Momo felt confident in. She is wearing a white, puffy sleeved crop top over a white vinyl skirt, accented by white lace gloves and a turquoise butterfly necklace with a matching faux fur clutch. The real statement of her look, however, are her boots: one is thigh high, reaching almost to the hem of her skirt, while the other stands barely ankle height. Both are printed with a striking floral pattern that does well to accent the graceful curves of her calves and thighs. She looks refined and elegant, with a hint of fun and mischief. When she and Denki had finally decided on this look, they hadn't been quite sure what genre to place it in, but according to Denki, that didn't matter: the true spirit of street fashion was finding a way to express yourself uniquely and authentically.

Hitoshi and Kyouka follow a short ways behind them, letting them have their moment while staying close enough to share part of it with them. Their job - as designated by Denki - is also to take candid pictures of the two fashionistas. "For our big debut," Denki had said. "All the best stars have an intriguing collection of candids from before they made it big."

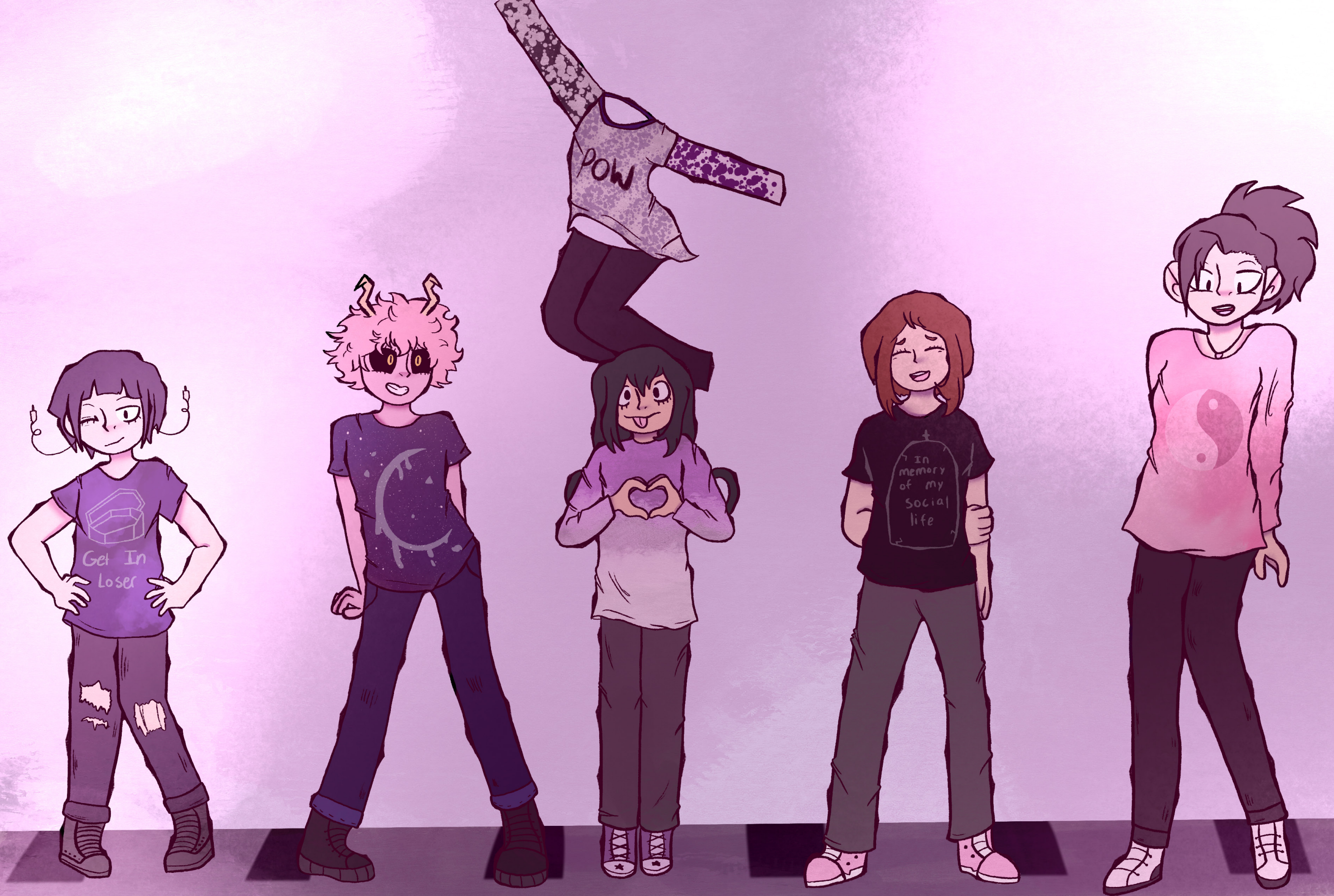
At the time, Momo had laughed, but now, in the thick of the moment, she admits she'll appreciate having a few photos to remember the night by. She'll be glad to remember how radiant her friend looks in this moment, how at peace he seems under the evening city lights.

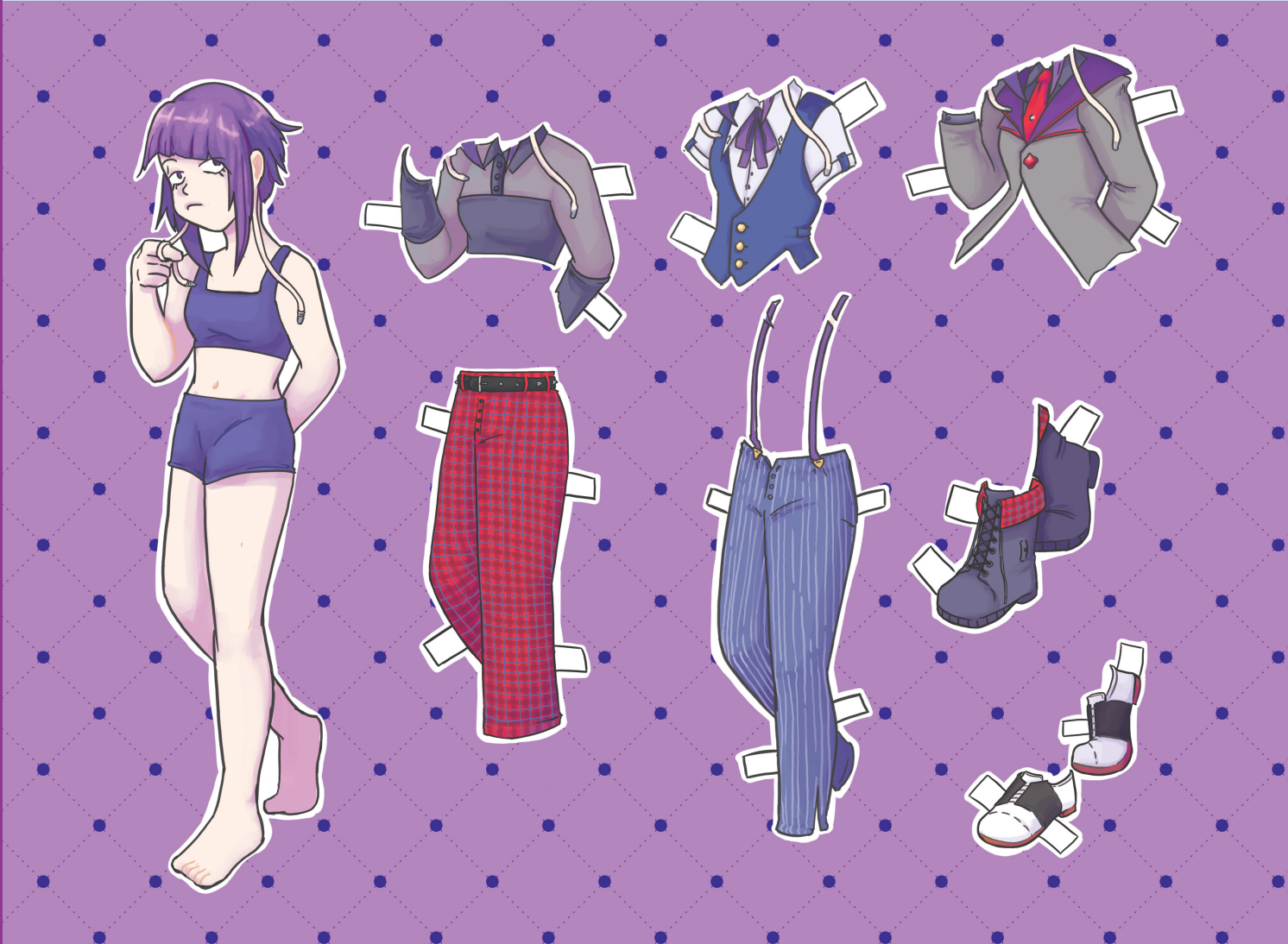
Glancing at his nails, however, she notices they could use a fresh coat of polish. She smiles. No matter - she'll take care of that during their next study session later this week.

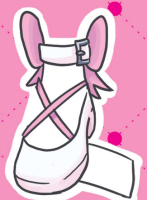
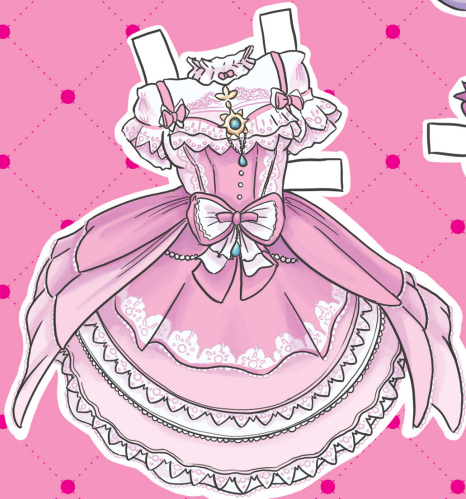
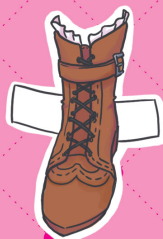
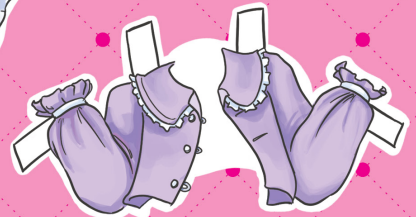
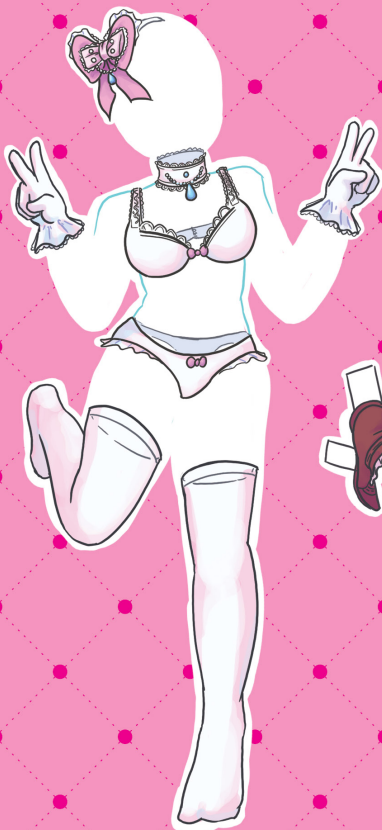
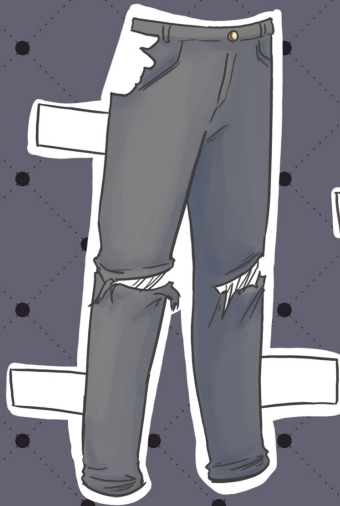
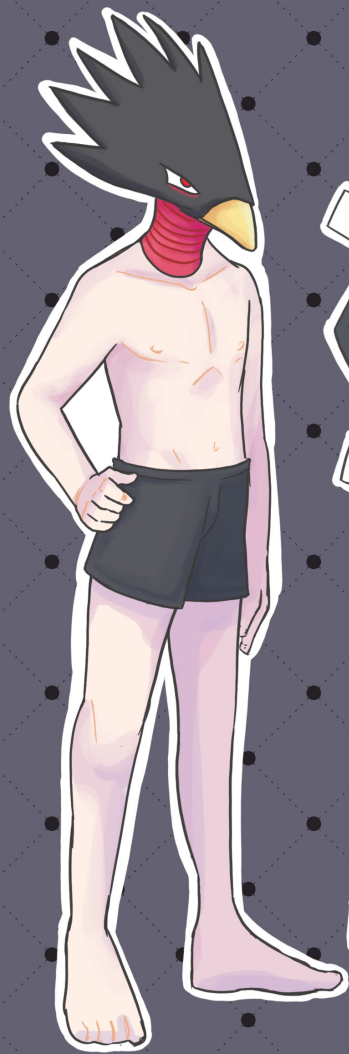


GO! PLUS ULTRA!











Kaleidoscope

ALTERNATIVE FASHION
MAGAZINE, 2019 - 2020

Moderators' Note

Thank you for supporting
KALEIDOSCOPE: an
Alternative Fashion My Hero
Academia Zine.

We are thrilled to share our
hard work with you and
appreciate your support of this
project.

Kaleidoscope is a fan-driven project
inspired by the works of Kohei
Horikoshi.

Please do not sell or print this zine for
commercial use.

MODERATORS

ROSE	HEAD SOCMED GRAPHICS	TWITTER	TUMBLR
KERO	FORMAT	TWITTER	
EMPRESS	BETA	TWITTER	
STARKTEAS	ORG	TWITTER	

COVER ARTIST

ANAKITO	TWITTER	TUMBLR
---------	-------------------------	------------------------

ARTISTS

CUPGAYKES	19	AO3	
DEXTRASINISTRA	20	TWITTER	INSTA
DO96ITE	21	TWITTER	INSTA
DOODLECAKES	22, 30	TWITTER	
EUCLASE	31, 32	INSTA	
HEMOTYPE	33	INSTA	TUMBLR
KYRAN	50, 51	TWITTER	
KUROCCHIHIME	52	INSTA	
MEEKHAYL	59	TWITTER	TUMBLR
MELLOWDAYDREAMS	60	TWITTER	
PRESTOCRAYON	61	TWITTER	TUMBLR
SEVENTH TEA	74, 75	TWITTER	TUMBLR
OLIVIA (TRIXRITA)	76	TWITTER	INSTA
UQEI	77	INSTA	
USHIIPURIIN	79	INSTA	
ZHEILLA	80	TWITTER	



WRITERS

GREATCLOUDNINJA	04	TWITTER	AO3
EMERALDWAVES	21	TWITTER	AO3
ERZA MIKAZUKI	34	TWITTER	AO3
KYUUKA KOINU	52	TWITTER	AO3
MIRA	62	TWITTER	AO3
OTA	77	TWITTER	AO3
SMURFEE	87	TWITTER	AO3

MERCH ARTISTS

BENJI	81	INSTA	
OLIVIA	94, 95	TWITTER	INSTA
SCRUMPY	96, 97	TWITTER	AO3

GO! PLUS ULTRA!